Is social work education life changing? A unitary appreciative inquiry into the impact of social work education on a person's beliefs, values and behaviour

Mel Hughes

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Abstract

As a Doctorate in Professional Practice, this thesis documents my personal, professional and academic development, within the field of social work education. I reflect on the current context of social work education; underpinning educational theory, research approaches and my educational practice, to find methods which are congruent with my social work values. My learning is informed by the research component of this thesis. This was conducted as a unitary appreciative inquiry which recognises "human wholeness and uniqueness" (Cowling 2004a, p202). The inquiry explores the impact of social work education on five people within the context of their lives. The findings, presented as a unitary appreciative profile (Cowling 2004b), highlight changes to the participants themselves, their relationships with others and the way they view the world. Participants talked of "seeing oppression everywhere", experiencing changes to their value base, developing different or broader perspectives, being more knowledgeable and recognising the influence of their upbringing, background and culture on the views and beliefs they held. They reflected on learning from a wide range of experiences outside of the classroom and the influence of these on their social work practice and their personal and professional development.

As a researcher and a social work educator, the findings opened my eyes to the extent to which qualifying social work education could be life changing. It led me to consider how this impact could be acknowledged more explicitly within social work education and utilised to enhance the experience for students as well as for the outcomes of the profession. This has led to an increased emphasis, in my own practice, on fostering criticality, reflexivity, curiosity and resilience, to enable learners to respond to the ever changing nature of social work practice. These are explored in the practice development component of this thesis and through the development of a new model of practice learning.

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Accompanying material

CD

The findings are, in part, presented through the medium of a digital story. This has been recorded to the attached CD. Readers will be prompted to view the digital story within chapter eight, presentation of the research findings.

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Author's declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with Bournemouth University regulations. The work is original except where indicated by special reference in the text and no part of the thesis has been submitted for any other degree or examination. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author and in no way represent those of Bournemouth University.

Introduction to the thesis

This thesis documents my doctoral studies concerning the student experience and the impact of social work education on a person's beliefs, values and behaviour. Conducted as a unitary appreciative inquiry, the study sought to illuminate the impact of social work education on the whole person (not just aspects of a person's identity or life such as student or social worker). The findings identified a significant impact of social work education on students themselves, their relationships with others and the way they viewed the world. As a researcher and a social work educator the experience opened my eyes to the extent to which qualifying social work education could be life changing. It led me to consider how this impact could be acknowledged more explicitly within social work education and utilised to enhance the experience for students as well as for the outcomes of the profession. Insight gained throughout this process provided many catalysts for my own critical reflection and subsequent personal and professional development. These distinct areas and the connections between them are explored within this thesis.

Bourner et al (2001) make a clear distinction between a Doctorate in Professional Practice and the more traditional PhD;

> The PhD is concerned with making a contribution to theory per se whereas the Professional Doctorate is concerned with making research-based contribution to practice (2001, p.75)

My own aim for this doctoral study was to develop my practice as a social work educator and researcher and to contribute new knowledge to the field of social work education. As such, this thesis explores the links between:

- the current context of social work practice and education
- educational theory and the learning process
- knowledge, understanding and insight gained from the research inquiry into the experience of qualifying social work education
- my own developing practice as a researcher, academic and educator
- contributions made to the practice of social work education generally.

There are four components of a Doctorate in Professional Practice at Bournemouth University (Doctorate in Professional Practice handbook 2004, p.19):

1. Reviewing the literature
2. Conducting a research inquiry
3. Developing an area of practice
4. Providing a personal narrative

Whilst these elements are addressed throughout this thesis, they each provide the primary focus of parts one, two and three respectively. A personal narrative is incorporated into each section with final reflections regarding the overall impact on me in chapter twelve. Reflective components are fundamental to Doctorates in Professional Practice (Doncaster and Thorne 2000). I have incorporated personal reflections drawing on both practice wisdom and formal knowledge into the discourse throughout. The aim is to provide a critical reflective analysis of the social work education context, educational theories, research method and findings and to ascertain their relevance to this study and to my own personal and professional development.

Focus on values

In seeking ways of developing my professional practice I wanted to stay true to my personal and professional values as a social worker. These guided my social work practice and my transition into academia and professional education in 2005. I wanted to identify ways that my role as educator could be enhanced but also to guide my decisions regarding the development of my role as a researcher.

In the UK, social work professional values are identified within the National Occupational Standards for Social Work (TOPSS 2002, p.20) and the Code of Practice (GSCC 2004), as the need to have:

- Awareness of your own values, prejudices, ethical dilemmas and conflicts of interest and their implications on your practice
- Respect for, and the promotion of: each person as an individual; independence and quality of life for individuals, whilst protecting them from harm; dignity and privacy of individuals, families, carers, groups and communities

- Recognise and facilitate each person's use of language and form of communication of their choice
- Value, recognise and respect the diversity, expertise and experience of individuals, families, carers, groups and communities
- Maintain the trust and confidence of individuals, families, carers, groups and communities by communicating in an open, accurate and understandable way
- Understand and make use of strategies to challenge discrimination, disadvantage and other forms of inequality and injustice

Fundamentally, my approach to research inquiry and developing educational models is guided by the belief that a person is best understood within the context of their lives and that they are their own best expert. For this study, it involves understanding students' experiences in the context of their lives outside the classroom. The notion that a person's experience cannot be understood in isolation is a view shared by Martha Rogers (1990) and her belief in the irreducible nature of human beings. This concept underpins the unitary appreciative approach to this research inquiry (Cowling 2001; 2004a, 2004b, 2005; 2010 and Kemp 2004; Talley 2004; Cox 2004; Talley et al 2005; Alligood 2008; Rushing 2008; Repede 2009 and Cowling and Repede 2010). Unitary appreciative inquiry views the person as part of a greater whole; a concept which is explored in part two. It forms the basis of this thesis which presupposes that to understand a person and their experience, it is necessary to view them within the context of the world around them. This concept will be explored in part one in relation to educational theory and the impact of social work education on a person's life before drawing conclusions for my own practice and for social work education generally.

There are a number of factors explored in this thesis which demonstrate the congruence between my values and the various elements of this doctoral study. These are in relation to the research process itself as well as the insight, understanding and knowledge which can be generated through a unitary appreciative inquiry which can then inform social work practice and education. These can be summarised as follows:

- Unitary appreciative inquiry seeks to gain rich and deep insight, understanding and knowledge from the person themselves of a particular experience or context

- It reflects anti-oppressive principles as participants are recognised as the expert of their own experience and power is shared through participatory and appreciative approaches
- Participants are enabled to express themselves in creative ways, respecting their choice of language and forms of expression
- The emancipatory objectives of a unitary appreciative inquiry enable the participants to benefit directly from the research process. They are supported to express, analyse and reflect on their experience and to make changes which could improve their lives
- Insight, understanding and knowledge generated by a unitary appreciative inquiry can be disseminated using a variety of creative forms making it accessible to a wider audience
- Insight gained from the presentation of research findings can provide a catalyst from which others can reflect, analyse and evaluate practice.

Personal and professional development

The social work values identified including the premise that a person can be best understood within the context of their lives is also reflected in the goal of a Doctorate in Professional Practice to achieve personal as well as professional and academic development (Doncaster and Thorne 2000; Bourner et al 2001; Lester 2004; Stephenson et al 2006; Wellington and Sikes 2006). Acknowledging the impact of the doctoral process on me within the context of my life will form part of the personal narrative and the final chapter.

Thesis structure

Part one: context

Consideration is given in part one as to how social work values inform the current context of social work practice and education. Particular focus is placed on the use of self and the need for practitioners and students to demonstrate professional values and to exercise professional judgment, reflexivity and criticality. Literature is drawn on which shows that despite the demand, these skills and values are not always achieved by students engaged in qualifying social work education. Drawing on adult education literature and research such as the pedagogical approaches of Paul Friere, Carl Rogers, Malcolm Knowles and Jacques Mezirow, the use of self in the learning process is

explored and methods of achieving this more effectively are considered. Chapters within part one suggest that the emphasis in social work education on enabling students to align their values and beliefs with those of the profession could be met by approaches based on transformative learning theory. Using current literature I seek to identify how such changes can be fostered within educational settings by encouraging processes of self discovery and supporting learners to seek an understanding of the world around them and the situations they encounter.

Whilst identifying well established educational approaches for fostering transformative learning and enabling students to question their own values and beliefs to develop ones which are more inclusive and open to the views of others, part one also seeks to identify the gaps within the literature. There is very little evidence or consideration, for example, of the impact of transformative learning and changes to values and beliefs on the learner themselves and their lives. By identifying the shortfalls of current literature, I was able to identify emerging questions for consideration within this doctoral study such as the impact of these changes on students.

Part two: research

Part two documents the research inquiry which sought to explore this impact. Based on the view that a person is their own best expert, I took the approach that developing insight, awareness and knowledge of a particular context should start with the person with firsthand experience. This is demonstrated within part two by seeking to understand the experience of students of social work education and the impact it has had on their lives. Research processes from choosing a guiding methodology through to interpreting the findings are explored within these chapters.

Part three: practice

Ways that the learning generated from parts one and two have informed my practice and contributed new knowledge to the field of social work education are explored within part three, as is the impact of the doctoral process on me as a whole. This includes a practice development project where my learning informed the development of a new model of practice learning within my own social work programme and consideration of how this can inform current demands of social work education. Particular links are made to the new proposed Professional Capabilities Framework for social work (Social

Work Reform Board 2010) and how the model of practice learning could meet the reform board's proposal of 30 days skill development.

Aims

The aims of the research inquiry therefore are:

- To illuminate the unique experiences of student social workers in relation to the impact that social work education has had on their whole selves, their beliefs, values and behaviour, to inform the development of social work practice and education.

- To develop a model of fostering deep learning, transformational learning and critical reflection through the use of creative media such as storytelling, drawing or photography as forms of both expression and analysis of experience and learning.

Objectives

The objectives by which these aims will be met are:

- To listen to students' views, perspectives and experiences of undertaking social work education
- To develop a unitary appreciative profile (Cowling 2005) of the person which seeks to represent their experience of social work education and the impact on their whole selves (not just as students or social workers)
- To develop four types of knowledge as is the aim of UAI: experiential, presentational, propositional and practical as defined by Heron (1996), from these experiences
- To critically reflect on the impact of social work education on the person and the relevance and implications for social work practice, social work education and education generally
- To utilise, evaluate and reflect on the effectiveness of using creative media to facilitate expression and analysis of experience within social work education.

Purpose of the literature review

There are many published texts offering guidance on how to construct and present a literature review at Doctoral level. While they suggest differences in content and style, many emphasise the importance of identifying its purpose and what it is that the review seeks to demonstrate or achieve (Hart 1998; Wolcott 2001; O'Leary 2004; Potter 2006; Berg 2007). It is recognised that it is likely to accomplish several purposes (Creswell 2009).

The purpose of reviewing the literature within this thesis is:

- To set the scene
- To identify the underpinning theoretical context
- To identify gaps in the literature and the emerging questions which warrant further exploration
- To identify the focus of my own research study and the contribution of new and original knowledge in response to these gaps and questions
- To justify my choice of method
- To identify links between the literature, the research study and my own professional practice as a social work educator
- To analyse the research findings and conclusions in the context of existing knowledge

More implicit within this is the purpose of the review to establish my own credibility by demonstrating my knowledge base, understanding and insight into the topic and its current issues (Hart 1998; Wolcott 2001; O'Leary 2004; Potter 2006).

According to O'Leary (2004, p.66), literature "inspires, informs, educates, and enlightens; it generates ideas, helps form significant questions and is instrumental in the process of research design". Discussions relating to the literature throughout this thesis reflect this process. They provide an account of my own process of discovery and learning and identify the significant questions which emerged at each stage. Critical analysis within subsequent chapters is informed by these questions.

Literature is incorporated throughout this research thesis as opposed to just one stand alone chapter (Wolcott 2001; Creswell 2009; Costley et al 2010). This is to better

ensure a synthesis, analysis and critique of wider knowledge that is situated within the context of this study (Wolcott 2001). The multiple purposes of the literature review, as identified above, are addressed throughout this thesis in what Wolcott (2001, p.74) describes as a 'when and as needed basis'.

Whilst entitled a literature review, it includes sources other than literature (Hart 2001; O'Leary 2004; Potter 2006; Costley et al 2010). Potter (2006, pp.161-164) suggests the use of:

- Electronic sources
- Journal articles (professional and academic)
- Conference papers
- Books including teaching texts
- Dictionaries
- Other students' dissertations and theses
- Government documents
- Statistics
- People and networks

Costley et al (2010) suggest that work based research should include more professionally based knowledge and information such as policy documents. These are all drawn upon within this thesis in meeting the above aims. A critical review of the literature is also achieved by providing a reflective analysis of the information reviewed and by relating it and applying it to practice (Costley et al 2010). It seeks to respond to questions emerging from the literature and other sources being explored.

Search terms

To ensure rigour and a coherent synthesis of research (O'Dochartaigh 2002; Potter 2006; Creswell 2009; Fink 2010), background research was undertaken on this range of topics using a number of online databases such as Academic Search Premier, ASSIA, British Nursing Index, Capacity Builder, CINAHL, Cochrane, Ebsco ejs, Ingenta, IBSS and Social work abstracts in addition to using Google scholar and library catalogues.

Search terms varied for each topic being explored and were repeated at intervals between 2007 and July 2011. In relation to the social work education context (chapter one) I drew on my own knowledge and practice wisdom and that of other people and networks as a basis from which to explore current issues in more depth. I accessed journals, books, legislation and government guidance, independent inquiries and reviews; and social work organisation websites such as the General Social Care Council to identify current issues and their implications for social work education in England and the rest of the UK. I accessed international literature for social work, health and social care professions from which to explore and reflect on the issues being raised such as the focus on critical reflection and use of self within social work education.

The chapters on educational theory (chapters two and three), in particular the chapter on transformative learning theory draw predominantly on journal articles, conference papers and books. Search terms using the above range of databases and library catalogues, focussed on various combinations of each theorist's name, for example, Freire, Rogers, Knowles and Mezirow; other key authors emerging from the literature, for example, Taylor and Cranton; theoretical terms, for example, transformative learning theory, andragogy and humanist theory; and general search terms such as social work educational theory, adult educational theory and whole person education.

The aim was to seek answers to the questions which had emerged from the exploration of the social work context in relation to teaching values within social work education. Using advanced searches within each database, I used a combination of one word, keyword and phrase searches (O'Leary 2004; Bell 2005; Potter 2006) to find a range of results in each area. I also searched directly for articles identified within the reference lists of the literature I had accessed.

Due to hundreds of results being generated by some of the searches, the search terms were restricted to literature written in English which focussed on teaching and learning within formal educational settings such as universities, primarily although not exclusively involving social work education. Selections were made from work produced within the last ten years with the exception of seminal work by the authors themselves and related texts which were sometimes older.

Chapters in part two of the thesis focus on the research study itself (method, findings and discussion). A range of journals, conference papers and books were drawn on in addition to other students' theses. The search process was similar to that previously described but relied more heavily on identifying journal articles identified by other authors who had used or referred to the approach and methods being used. This ensured access to all of the current, published studies using unitary appreciative inquiry up until the time of writing. In relation to research design, such as the process of conducting a literature review or the consideration of ethical issues, a range of texts and journal articles were accessed from which to explore the issues relevant to this study.

Chapters in part three of the thesis, focus on the development of professional practice. These draw on all of the literature and sources already identified and the discussions and analysis within the thesis so far. Further searches were then conducted to explore the implications of emerging questions and themes in relation to my own personal and professional development and to social work education generally. Similar processes were used to those described above.

Part one: context

Chapter one: Social work education: context and issues

When exploring the student experience within social work education it is important to provide the context in which the discussion is based. Chapter one aims to explore my perception and practice wisdom by reviewing relevant research, literature and policies. I do this first through a process of scene setting; offering a brief historical overview of social work education and an analysis of recent policy changes and guidance affecting social work education in England. A key focus for the research study and subsequent practice development are social work values. In this chapter, I consider research and literature which explores the impact of social work education on student lives to demonstrate the emphasis placed on the importance of personal and professional values and on the use of self.

Social work and social work education within the UK has experienced a significant overhaul in recent years and is still in a state of transition. I have experienced this firsthand as a student when completing my own qualifying education, subsequently as a social work practitioner and educator when supporting students within placement environments and as a lecturer in social work since 2005. My perception of these changes is that as a profession, we make more demands on students with regards to knowledge, skills and values and their use of self than ever before. This however is at a time when social work educators are struggling to offer as much direct, face to face and individual contact time due to increased cohort sizes and other demands (Cooner 2010). Whilst demands of the profession are increasing due to diminishing resources and higher demands for social work services; the number of social workers being employed is diminishing. This inevitably places increased pressure on the existing workforce and for newly qualified social workers entering the profession.

In my own experience as a lecturer, our undergraduate cohort has doubled from approximately 25 in 2006 to between 50 and 60 in 2009, 2010 and 2011. This is a national trend. The Department of Health's review of the social work degree in England published in 2008, reported a 38% increase in enrolments since the introduction of the new degree in 2003 (Kings College and London Social Care Workforce Research Unit

2008) . The General Social Care Council reports a continuing trend in this area with a 5% rise in cohort sizes between 2008 and 2009 with fewer students failing to complete (GSCC 2009). This has been as a result of increased promotion and publicity which perhaps no longer reflects the demands of the profession. Larger cohorts however have led to demands on social work educators to adapt their style of teaching and learning to accommodate increased numbers.

My concern in relation to this study is whether individual students and their needs are being lost within this process at a time when they perhaps need the support to adapt to the challenges of the course and the profession more than ever. This concern will be explored throughout this thesis when considering the impact of social work education on students and the implications for social work educators.

History of social work education

It is perhaps useful to provide a brief history, in order to establish the current issues and context, in relation to the role of self and professional values in contemporary social work practice and education. The International Association of Schools of Social Work and the International Federation of Social Workers for example, who agreed on the international definition of social work, identify that the profession grew out of humanitarian and democratic ideals and that human rights and social justice are the motivation for social work action (2001).

Value driven practice is evident historically within both social work practice and education over the past 100 years in the UK. The role of social work was initially the domain of charitable organisations and unpaid women workers striving for social change (Thompson 2009). According to the records collated by Davis (2008) of the first course in the UK for social workers established at Birmingham University, lectures in the early 1900s focussed on the British Constitution, legislation, policies and the justice and education systems for a range of social and welfare workers. In 1928 a practice element was introduced which paved the way for the curriculum in place today across the UK and most of the world. Emphasis is now on professional competence and the integration of knowledge and practice, such as legislation, social policy, methods of intervention and an understanding of society and the individual.

Lymbery (2005) identifies the origins of social work practice dating back to the early 19th century as having three inter-connected strands: individual casework; social administration and social action, the balance of which is reflected in the policy directives of the time and in the curricular for social work education. Casework involved responding to individual circumstances such as families in need and saw the emergence of theories to ascertain a common base for social work and philanthropic practice (Lymbery 2005). Casework became more prevalent in the 1940's when the end of World War II warranted the need for trained and salaried social workers. According to Davis (2008), it was the Younghusband report in 1947 that identified the need to establish a research base for the profession along with national standards for training and a general social work award as opposed to specialist routes. Links between practitioners and researchers were created.

The social work role at the time (late 1940's) was closely linked with the introduction of the welfare state and led to an emphasis on what Lymbery (2005) describes as the social administration role which included interventions to relieve poverty. The concept of eligibility was introduced for support and services and the need to develop evidenced based theories which provided consistency in deciding who was eligible for what. Davis' (2008) overview of the history of social work education at Birmingham University appears to reflect this change as it documents the introduction of degrees in social administration at around this time. The social administration role retains its dominance in contemporary social work practice (Morley 2008; Lay and McGuire 2010; Mackay and Woodward 2010). Emphasis is on arranging services where the allocation of resources is based on those assessed as most in need as opposed to everyone in need. Work is characterised by strict rules regarding what work is conducted with whom, how and by when. This can undermine professional autonomy as emphasised by Munro (2011) and create dissonance for social workers seeking to work within the values said to define the profession which promote choice, rights and quality of life for everyone. These issues are explored later within this chapter.

In 1962, the National Certificate in Social Work was introduced (Davis 2008) but this ran alongside a range of other courses for people working within the social work field. With the aim of standardising social work education, two awards were introduced in the early 1970's: the Certificate in Social Services (CSS) for those employed as social care

workers and the Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (CQSW) for others. This sought to provide standardised routes to social work qualification. Both were replaced in 1994 with the Diploma in Social Work (DipSW) which in turn was replaced in 2003 in England and 2004 in Scotland with the current social work degree (with undergraduate and post graduate routes).

Social action is the third of Lymbery's (2005) strands of social work. This formalised the concept of a professional value base for the social work profession. Social action was based on community oriented approaches to social work and beliefs that the more privileged in society should help the less privileged. Lymbery argues that it was an aspect that whilst evident since the 19th century, was strongest in the late 1960's with the rise of the radical social work movement. Critical of the traditional social work role of social control, the movement argued that social work should be about improving people's lives "not only by helping individuals and families but also by striving for structural change" (Radical Social Work 2011, p.1).

The 1960's also saw a return in emphasis on individual casework and therapy based interventions, influenced by the prominence of psycho-dynamic theory (Cowburn et al 2000). Both have been sidelined in recent years under the dominance of the social administration role reinforced by legislation such as the NHS and Community Care Act 1990 and its emphasis on the assessment of need. I still encounter frequent discussions with social work students and practitioners venting their frustrations at the administrative and bureaucratic role of contemporary social work practice and talking about a desire to 'do real social work'. This is generally purported to be the 'hands on' individual and collectivist approaches identified by Lymbery (2005) and is largely thought to be the domain of independent, voluntary and private sector organisations. These are often roles however where the social work qualification is not a requirement and the pay is far less.

Whilst tasks and roles within social work are currently dominated by administrative and bureaucratic systems, the professional value base which emerged from the social action strand and the radical social work movement has remained a key principle of social work practice and education. It is identified as a key component by which social workers and students are monitored and assessed (Skills for Care 2002). The social

work role and purpose is now guided by the widely accepted international definition of social work as:

> a profession which promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work (International Association of Schools of Social work and the International Federation of Social Workers 2001, p.1)

The obstacles in achieving these principles are explored within the remainder of this chapter when considering the current context of social work education and the role of professional values and the use of self.

Recent changes in social work practice and education

In the past decade, demands on social work education in England have been significant. Initially this was driven by the then Labour government's commitment to raise standards in social care through the introduction of the Care Standards Act 2000. This drive saw the introduction of the General Social Care Council (GSCC) to regulate the standards of the social care workforce in England which included the introduction of a professional register, code of practice and accreditation of social work course providers. Protection of the title of social worker was also created, restricting its use only to those with a social work qualification who are registered with the GSCC. Those deemed to be in breach of the Codes of Practice, could be removed from the social care register. The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) was established to collate and develop resources to promote best practice and TOPSS (now Skills for Care) developed the National Occupational Standards for Social Work under which all social workers must operate and by which all social work students are assessed. When the social work honours degree was implemented in 2003 in England and 2004 in Scotland, the aim was to raise the standards of the professional qualification by aligning it with equivalent professions such as nursing in the UK and Europe. Replacing the two year Diploma in Social Work (DipSW) with the three year undergraduate degree has had many implications for the learning process. Increased emphasis is placed on practice learning,

partnerships with stakeholders and the importance of service user and carer input into all aspects of the recruitment, learning and assessment process (Skills for Care 2002).

Rather than as a separate strand, the focus on professional values now underpins all areas of teaching, learning and assessment. Shifting the emphasis in this way may have affected the experiences of social work students, potentially drawing more deeply on their own views, values and life experiences. The aim is for learning to be more meaningful for learners and to better equip them for the demands of the profession, particularly as identified by service users and carers in a consultation process which informed the development of the social work degree (Skills for Care 2002). The implications of this shift will be considered within this study as the experience for students of reflecting on values, beliefs and behaviour are explored.

The case for reform in social work education

Despite the scale of the changes implemented as a result of the Care Standards Act 2000, these have since changed again. The need for continued reform within social work practice and education was reinforced by the recommendations made by Lord Laming following the public inquiries he chaired into the deaths of Victoria Climbie (2003) and Peter Connolly (Baby P, 2009). Both Laming inquiries reported that some child protection social work services were failing in many areas. Laming (2009) recognised that there had been improvements since his first report in 2003. This included widespread support for the then Governments' initiative: Every Child Matters (Department of Education and Skills 2003). In relation to social work education, he identified that the degree was "widely acknowledged to be a great advance in improving social work skills" (2009, p51). Laming (2009) and more recently Munro (2011) who was commissioned by the Secretary of State for Education to conduct an independent review of child protection reported that the quality and content of courses was inconsistent and there were insufficient systems in place to ensure that standards were being met. Laming highlighted research that found that two thirds of newly qualified children and family social workers felt that their degree "equipped them just enough or not at all for their current role" (Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) cited in Laming 2009, p.51). Munro reinforced this when stating that

> Not all newly qualified social workers are emerging from degree courses with the necessary knowledge, skills and expertise; and they are especially unprepared to deal with the challenges posed by child protection work (Munro 2011, p.97).

In 2008, the Department of Health and the Department for Children, Schools and Families established the Social Work Task Force (SWTF) to review the social work profession and to advise them on reform. The Taskforce published its final report (Building a safe and confident future) in December 2009 which was accepted by the then Government in its entirety (SWTF 2009). Recommendations included the need for a stronger voice led by a College of Social Work; a single nationally recognised career structure with clear and binding standards for employers regarding how frontline social work should be resourced, managed and supported and the introduction of a licence to practice (SWTF 2009). For qualifying social work education, it recommended increased emphasis on the need for more depth in relation to "assessment frameworks, risk analysis, communication skills, managing conflict and hostility and working with other professionals" (2009, p.19). The SWTF reinforced the need for three established aspects of social work education: knowledge, skills and values but with increased emphasis on the need to enable students to make links between theory and practice.

The change of government in 2010 also impacted on the social work profession including social work education. The coalition government's report: Liberating the NHS, report of the arms-length bodies review (Department of Health 2010) led to the decision to abolish the General Social Care Council. Regulation of social workers and the Code of Practice will be transferred to the Health Professionals Council, which currently regulates 15 professions. This includes the transfer of responsibility for regulating social work education (DoH 2010). The HPC Standards of Proficiency will provide the basic standards for social workers to maintain their professional registration (HPC 2012). Whilst it is too early to know the specific implications of this, further changes are inevitable. The future of Skills for Care (formerly TOPPS which developed the National Occupational Standards for Social Work) and SCIE are as yet unknown. The establishment of the College of Social work and their discussions regarding a merger with the British Association of Social Work (BASW) is likely to affect such

decisions. All of which will have implications for social work education and the student's experience of it.

The impact of these changes is also intensified by the current economic climate both in terms of higher education and social work practice. As HEI's prepare for cuts and freezes to their teaching, buildings and research budgets and the increase in student fees, the Department of Health is consulting on the current bursary scheme provided to students of social work, currently worth £4,400 per year (NHS Business Services Authority 2011). The likely impact on students is that fees will be higher, the social work bursary will end or be restricted and the pressure to find quality practice learning opportunities within the public and voluntary sector (who are themselves facing cuts), will increase. The impression this gives students regarding their value and worth is likely to be affected by these changes. With regards to the student experience, the financial constraints place increased pressures on the quality of their learning. Juggling the demands of their course with outside pressures is becoming increasingly common. Already in my own experience I have seen an increase in the numbers of students having to commit to paid work alongside the demands of the course including whilst undertaking a 35 hour per week placement. As a result, students experience an increase in pressure and have less time to focus on meaningful learning and critical reflection.

A positive outlook for social work education

Despite the negative public image of social workers (SWTF 2009); and the demands and uncertainty identified above; changes have led to many positive aspects and improvements. The profession continues to experience an increase in the uptake of social work degree places as identified at the beginning of this chapter. Social work has risen to the top ten subject choices for UCAS applications and figures show a 41.3% increase in applications to social work degree courses between 2009-10 and 2010-11 (Children's Workforce Development Council 2011). This enables social work education providers to implement recommendations to improve the calibre of entrants to the profession. From my own experience as a lecturer on a social work programme, this has enabled us to shortlist only those applicants with good academic backgrounds combined with professional and personal qualities; and those we view to have a sound value base and significant personal or professional experience in an area relevant to social work practice. This is a key recommendation made by Munro (2011) who calls for a regime

of testing and interviewing candidates for social work courses which balances academic and personal skills.

Proposed Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF)

The Social Work Reform Board was established in 2010 to implement the recommendations of the Task Force. The Reform Board has the objective to develop a system in which there are sufficient high quality social workers to help children, young people and adults, in which social workers are well supported and in which the public feels confident (HM government 2010).

The Reform Board published its first report in December 2010 (Building a safe and confident future: one year on) seeking consultation in five key areas, one of which was social work education. The report proposes a move from the National Occupational Standards for social work to a Professional Capabilities Framework which acknowledges stages of a social work career from entry into qualifying programmes through to advanced practitioner and social work manager level (appendix 1). The proposed capabilities framework (PCF) places the role of practice educator at a more senior career stage alongside manager and advanced practitioner. From my view and from informal discussions with practice educators and placement providers locally, this has been welcomed as recognition of the importance of this role to the profession and the responsibilities involved in raising standards and acting as a gatekeeper for the profession.

The proposed nine key capabilities within the framework (SWRB 2010, p.9) are:

1. Professionalism
2. Values and ethics
3. Diversity
4. Rights, justice and economic wellbeing
5. Knowledge
6. Critical reflection and analysis
7. Intervention and skills
8. Contexts and organisations
9. Professional leadership.

As the PCF rainbow in appendix one shows, the expectations regarding each of the nine key areas increase at each career stage. The Reform Board use Price's (2004, p.227) definition of a capability:

> an integration of knowledge, skills, personal qualities and understanding used appropriately and effectively – not just in familiar and highly focused specialist contexts but in response to new and changing circumstances.

These are key transferrable skills for graduates of any degree programme and are likely contribute to the global knowledge economy not just the social work profession. Potentially for the students, learning can lead to life skills which can support their own personal development and resilience.

In relation to the social work profession, the PCF identifies a number of components including "an ethical component that integrates knowledge of culture, values and social awareness into professional practice" (SWRB 2010, p.9). This has a number of implications for this study. Social workers and social work students are required to draw on a range of knowledge sources including experiential learning. Emphasis is on the importance of values and personal qualities and the integration of these into the person's practice. Acknowledgment is made of the importance of the relationship when working with people who use services and their carers. In part three of this thesis (practice development) I consider how the findings of the research inquiry into the individual experience of learning and the focus on beliefs, values and behaviour can help inform the integration of these capabilities into the social work curriculum.

Use of self in social work education

Increased emphasis on self reinforces the view that social work education, as with other professional education, is not restricted to the passive acquisition of knowledge but must also focus on the personal and professional development of skills, values and the implications of theory for practice. The aim of social work education is to improve the quality of the workforce through the development of knowledgeable, competent, confident, self aware and reflective practitioners who are able to cope with the

pressures, demands and risks of the work whilst maintaining a professional value base which places service users and carers at the heart of the process.

To achieve this, contemporary social work education and social work practice as guided currently by the National Occupational Standards for Social Work (2002); the code of practice (GSCC 2002) and recommendations by Lord Laming (2003; 2009); the Social Work Task Force (2009), the Social Work Reform Board (2010) and Munro (2011) place an increased emphasis on the individual; on personal qualities; on the need to critically analyse and reflect and on the use of self.

The Social Work Task Force for example, makes recommendations for entry into the profession which emphasise the need for social work students to have particular personal qualities such as "insight, common sense, confidence, resilience, empathy and the use of authority" (2009, p.17). Service users and carers have emphasised the need for social workers to possess personal qualities such as warmth, empathy, understanding and who are punctual, reliable and trustworthy (Skills for Care 2002). The codes of practice identify the need for social workers to "be honest and trustworthy" (Codes of practice 2002, p.7). The National Occupational Standards include a number of value requirements such as the need for social workers to have an "awareness of own values, prejudices, ethical dilemmas, conflict of interests and implications for practice" (TOPSS 2002, p.63) and Munro identifies the need for social workers to develop skills in adopting "an authoritative but compassionate style of working" (2011, p.96).

I would argue that the emphasis is as much on *how* the social worker practices as on *what* it is they do. In some ways the emphasis on personal qualities marks a return to the use of self which was present in the early 1960's when psychodynamic theory influenced social work practice and placed emphasis on the therapeutic relationship (Cowburn et al 2000). Current emphasis on self also recognises the context in which social workers operate. It recognises global, structural and cultural influences on social work practice in addition to the individual and personal level relationship as acknowledged within the international definition of social work. Whilst recognising the role of self, personal qualities, power and responsibility, it does so within a wider socio-political context. Challenging social injustice is as fundamental to the social work role

as developing inter-personal relationships. Whether this is the case for all students and all social work practice settings however is the subject of much debate.

The role of social work education in facilitating the development of values and the use of self

Mackay and Woodward (2010) argue that the degree falls short in enabling students to articulate a strong values framework. They argue that students struggle particularly at a structural level in articulating their understanding of anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory practice. In addition to the current codes of practice, the Reform Board have placed professional values and the need to demonstrate an understanding of diversity, rights and justice at the heart of their proposed Professional Capabilities Framework. Specifically identified within different capabilities is a social worker's obligation to be:

- knowledgeable about social work professional values
- to conduct themselves ethically
- to work in partnership with people who use services
- to understand the issues relating to diversity and difference
- to challenge discrimination and oppression
- to enhance human rights and equality

(SWRB 2010, pp.10-11).

Personal qualities and responsibilities are referred to in a number of the proposed capabilities. Whilst some emphasis has been placed on recruiting students who already possess these qualities and values, the role for social work education is to assess individual students' values, beliefs and behaviours and to enable them to align these with those of the profession or prevent them from qualifying if they do not. As previously mentioned, social workers, including students, who are found to be in breach of the codes of practice can be removed from the social care register. It raises questions as to whether this is achievable; whether a person's values, beliefs and behaviours can change and whether social work education can facilitate this change. I frequently encounter discussions, particularly during admissions processes, where practitioners and people who use services argue that knowledge can be taught but values cannot be. The

clear view is that a person's values do not change. I am keen for this research study including the review of the literature to explore whether this is the case and whether enabling students to critically reflect on their values and beliefs can lead to change. Any such process will inevitably bring into scrutiny aspects of a person's sense of self and identity. A primary aim of this study (as identified in the introduction) is to explore what this impact has been and to use the insight gained to inform the development of social work practice and education.

Critical reflection in social work education

Critical reflection and analysis is identified explicitly as one of the nine capabilities proposed by the Reform Board. Social workers require the skills to: process, make sense of and learn from their experiences and to adapt their practice accordingly. Reflection in action was a concept developed by Schon in the 1980's when exploring the strategies practitioners used for interpreting and responding to multiple situations in practice. Critical of a technical rational approach to learning, Schon (1996) argued that applying set categories of knowledge or rules was an inadequate method for responding to unpredictable and uncertain situations and shifting boundaries. He described reflection in action as "thinking on your feet" and "keeping your wits about you" (Argyris and Schon 1996, p.21).

Mezirow and associates (1990, p.1) identify reflection as enabling "us to correct distortions in our beliefs and errors in problem solving". Mezirow argued that we make sense of a situation by interpreting it and that interpretation is based on prior experiences, beliefs, assumptions and what we expect to happen. If something does not work or happen in the way we expect, then we attempt to re-interpret it based on this new experience. Mezirow added another dimension to this with his exploration of critical reflection; identifying critical reflection as involving "a critique of the presuppositions on which our beliefs have been built" (1990, p.1). A deeper level of reflection is required by focussing not only on what happened or what could have been done differently but why it happened. It involves challenging your own values, beliefs and behaviour which are approaches explored within the following chapters.

Social work education seeks to enable students to develop skills in critical analysis and reflection in order to meet the requirements of the profession. This reflects a shift from a competence based approach which focused primarily on technical, rational and

predictable responses which Argyris and Schon (1996) describe as technical expertise, to a now widely accepted reflective paradigm (Ringel 2003; Rai 2006; Clare 2007; Harrison 2009; Guransky et al 2010; Lay and McGuire 2010; Wehbi and Straka 2011). The shift acknowledges what Schon (1999) and Mezirow (1990) identify as highly complex situations which are not easily understood or responded to with standardised formulae. Social work educators cannot cover every aspect of knowledge a social worker or student may require for every situation they may encounter (Leung 2007). Social work practice is never static and so even formal knowledge such as legislation, policies and processes quickly become outdated. Emphasis must therefore be on enabling practitioners to generate new knowledge and ways of responding (Schon 1999) as they are informed by new research, thinking, experiences and practice. Interpretation of this new knowledge, however, will be influenced by the social worker's values and beliefs and so must include an ability to recognise how this has informed their decisions. This is still an area of much debate with many employers demanding students with a wider knowledge base in terms of 'doing the job'. It could be argued that their priority is often for training rather than education and there is much debate as to what should form part of the social work curriculum.

In relation to critical reflection and the use of self, students are encouraged to reflect on how their own experiences, views and beliefs may have influenced positively or negatively on their decisions and judgments and to consider the implications on the outcome for the person. As Chow et al (2011) identify, students are encouraged to engage in a dual process. Reflexive persons

> use their personal experience to understand and critique the knowledge that is introduced to them. And, they appraise and make sense of their personal experience using that knowledge (p.143).

The reflective process involves the use of self and of experiential learning to 'make sense' of situations and events in both professional and personal contexts.

The Professional Capability Framework proposed by the Social Work Reform Board (2010) and proposals by Munro (2011) support the paradigm shift from technical rationality such as learning and applying a set of fixed rules, to one which acknowledges and legitimises the role of reflective practice. The Reform Board

explicitly identifies critical analysis and reflection as one of the nine proposed capabilities by which social workers and students would be monitored and assessed with the expectation of continued professional development in this area throughout their career.

The support for critical analysis and reflection does not necessarily indicate a move away from technical expertise and rationality as indicated in some of the literature in this field (Bogo et al 2011; Chow et al 2011 amongst others). In practice my experience is that emphasis is still placed in practice on technical knowledge and that local authority social work offices tend to be highly bureaucratic environments. Current health and social care legislation and social policies reinforce this social administrative focus. Whilst the aim of critical reflection is to achieve effective practice and better outcomes for those involved, there is a risk of conflict and dissonance when students find themselves within practice learning environments which are still dominated by technical, procedural and managerial tasks and what Mackay and Woodward (2010) argue as the increasingly standardised approaches to social work education and practice. They suggest this as a reason for students falling short of consistent critical analysis of values, particularly in relation to anti-oppressive practice and understanding service users' situations at a structural level.

Drawing on my own professional experience of supporting social work students within practice learning settings, students often find that their emerging professional autonomy is stifled by the constraints of the system such as targets, deadlines, case recording, eligibility criteria and the limitations of funding. This is reinforced by Munro (2011) and her criticisms of a system based on following rules at the expense of exercising professional expertise and judgment. This can lead to disillusionment and what Banks (2004 cited in Mackay and Woodward 2010, p.635) identifies as a submissive stance with practitioners "uncritically embracing the new requirements or conforming reluctantly to them". Such disillusionment can lead social work students and practitioners to question their abilities and their motivations regarding pursuing a career in social work if it is not perceived as congruent with the values of the profession promoted so fervently within social work education. Consequently, this can add to the pressures experienced by students and can impact on their sense of self and well-being.

Failing to engage in critical analysis and reflection however as developed by Schon (1999) and Mezirow (1996) can lead practitioners to make assumptions or impose their own beliefs in a way that can inhibit their own practice (Leung 2007). Social work education must seek to enable students to develop their evidenced-based reflective and analytical practice in a way which recognises the constraints of these systems and processes (Wilson et al 2007; Leung 2007; Morley 2008; Mackay and Woodward 2010). Critical reflection can be used to generate creative and dynamic responses to situations and dilemmas but also to challenge the dominant power relations and structures that restrict the purpose of effective social work (Morley 2008). Arguably, competent social work practice can be defined as the ability to achieve effective outcomes for those involved, within the inevitable constraints of the system by both challenging the system itself and by working creatively within it. It involves drawing on a critically reflective approach which, according to Fook (1999, p.202) "relies upon knowledge which is generated both empirically and self-reflectively".

Despite this shift and the generally wide acceptance of the need for critical analysis and reflection as a key social work capability (Ringel 2003; Rai 2006; Clare 2007; Harrison 2009; Guransky et al 2010; Lay and McGuire 2010; Wehbi and Straka 2011), it is not without its criticisms. Schon (1999) himself identifies that reflection is not generally accepted as a legitimate form of professional knowing in the way that technical expertise is. He acknowledges that this in part is due to the complexities of the reflective process and the difficulties in defining what it is. Bogo et al (2011) comment on how "reflection on practice wisdom has eluded concrete definition" (p187).

Within social work education, critical reflection has received criticism for the inconsistency in how it has been defined, taught and assessed. This led in 1999 to Ixer's widely quoted claim that "there is no such thing as reflection" (p513). Ixer argued that whilst the need for students to reflect had become widespread, this was often without a clear and agreed understanding of what reflection was and how it would be assessed. The potential result of this on more vulnerable students, he argued was an increased imbalance of power between the assessor and student. Wilson et al's (2007) findings eight years later identified student reports of inconsistencies between practice teachers and their expectations in this area, suggesting that a lack of clarity is still the case.

Gaps in the literature regarding the impact of critical reflection on the whole person

Research exploring the definitions of reflection within social work education and the provision of tools and strategies for incorporating this into social work pedagogy have risen significantly since Ixer's 1999 claim (Ringel 2003; Osmond and Darlington 2005; Leung 2007; Morley 2008; Harrison 2009; Johnston 2009; Lay and McGuire 2010; Guransky et al 2010; Pack 2010; Wehbi and Straka 2011; Chow et al 2011 amongst others). This also includes studies which are specific to practice learning environments (such as Smith et al 2007; Wilson et al 2007) and the development of models for assessing reflective writing and practice (Rai 2006; Bogo et al 2011). The reflective paradigm therefore is placed firmly within social work education at least alongside what Wilson et al (2007), describe as the competing paradigms of evidence-based practice and competence approaches to learning. Schon (1999) encouraged further study of critical reflection to demonstrate its rigour and relevance to practice as a tool in its own right and the above research studies respond to this. Whilst they all acknowledge difficulty, they attempt to legitimise the use of critical reflection within social work practice and education by evaluating its effectiveness for improving outcomes for those affected; and for creating opportunities for learning and for assessment.

Despite the significant increase in research into the use of critical reflection within social work education and practice, research into the student's experience of learning how to critically reflect and the impact this has had on their own practice is under-represented (Fook 2004; Clare 2007; Wilson et al 2007). Clare (2007) argues that most researchers explore the use of critical reflection without incorporating the student's perspective. How students learn to reflect and the impact this has on the development of their practice throughout their career is assumed but not really known. There is even less research available which explores the impact on the person themselves as a result of questioning and challenging their own beliefs and values or from viewing their previous experiences through the lens of their new knowledge and understanding. This is a gap that this research study seeks to address.

There is evidence to demonstrate that significant changes do take place as students experience a range of catalysts which lead to shifts in their beliefs, values and frames of reference (Argyris and Schon 1974; Mezirow 1996; Johns 2005). These are explored in chapters two and three of this thesis in relation to the underpinning educational theory.

There has been a significant increase in the range of social work texts aimed at students enabling the development of skills in critical reflection (including Fook 2004; Gould and Baldwin 2004; White et al 2006; Knott and Scragg 2007; Rutter and Brown 2011) which can help students to make sense of these changes. Exploration into the impact of these changes, transformations and consolidations on the person themselves however, remains minimal.

The transformative nature of social work education is touched on by Collins et al (2010) when identifying causes of stress amongst social work students. Other than this study, it seems that the literature exploring the impact of social work education on students is limited to research which has focussed only on aspects of a person's life such as spiritual wellbeing (Kamya 2000), parenting (Green Lister 2003) and reasons for retention (Hafford-Letchfield 2007). There has been little focus on the whole person within the context of their lives and the impact that critical analysis and reflection and resulting changes to values, beliefs and behaviour may have on their sense of self, their personal growth, their well-being and their relationships with others.

Social work education and personal growth

The literature relating to social work education and personal growth and qualities is also limited. Cournoyer (2000 p.35) states that "social work practice involves the conscious and deliberate use of oneself: you become the medium through which knowledge, attitudes and skills are conveyed" (cited in Reupert 2007, p.107). Pardeck and McCallister (1991, p.383) identified that "personal growth and development as well as intellectual growth of students are major goals of social work education" however their assessment in the early 1990's, of student's personal growth through completion of self expression, generalised contentment and self esteem scales, suggested that undergraduate social work education had "little or no effect on the personal growth or development of students" (p.385). They compare this to a study by Cournoyer in 1983 where social work students were assessed as having a decrease in assertiveness after their social work training (as a result of what Cournoyer termed 'battered student syndrome' p386). Non social work specific studies have identified an increase in self esteem, confidence and aspirations as a result of professional education (Maich et al 2000; Tam 2004) and my practice wisdom tells me that this is often the case within social work. It certainly reflects feedback from many, although not all students approaching qualification on my own programme. Recognition, understanding and

insight into how this may impact on the whole person however, appears to be missing from the literature.

A more recent study regarding social work student well-being is by Collins et al (2010) who report a high level of social work students feeling they were a 'person of worth'. Over a quarter of the first year students in their study however, reported negative attitudes about themselves such as feeling dissatisfied with themselves, not feeling proud of the people they were and not feeling that they were as good as other people. A useful exploration for future research would be whether the remainder of their qualifying education had any impact on these findings; whether these were negative or positive and what the role of social work education was in this. First year students I have worked with have reflected on the emotional challenges of their first year as a result of a number of adjustments. This included challenging their previous knowledge, beliefs, views and assumptions; adjusting to the demands of the course, entry into a new profession and concerns about their perceived abilities. A common comment was "this is all I have ever wanted to do but I am now questioning whether I can do it". Education of a transformative nature may well feel unsettling for some as their sense of self is challenged. This raises ethical concerns as to whether it is the role of social work educators to challenge or question a person's values given the stress or anxiety that this may create. Pedagogical approaches relating to the use of self and transformative learning are explored in the following two chapters in order to consider these concerns.

The strength of feelings identified by Collins et al (2010) and the limited literature explicitly acknowledging and addressing the impact of social work education on students brings me back to the concern I raised earlier in this chapter. I questioned whether as a profession, we were losing sight of the impact of social work education on individual students. I have identified many changes to social work education within this chapter which will inevitably add to the pressures and demands faced by students. The feelings expressed by the students in Collins et al's (2010) study may well reflect the impact of social work education on students nationally and internationally. Whilst this cannot be assumed, the impact on students should be explored.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to demonstrate that social work education is not just about professional training or teaching the mechanics of the job. On pages 33 and 34, I argued

that the aim of social work education is to improve the quality of the workforce (as identified in reports by Laming 2009; SWTF 2009; SWRB 2010 and Munro 2011) through the development of competent, confident, self aware and reflective practitioners. Students are required to cope with the pressures, demands and risks of social work practice whilst maintaining a professional value base which places service users and carers at the heart of the process. Increased emphasis has been placed on how students seek to understand and utilise their knowledge, skills and values within their role as a social worker to achieve the best outcomes for those involved. I am keen to explore whether a person's values are open to change through education and the impact on the individual if their beliefs and values are challenged or scrutinised. I hope for such insight to lead to better understanding of the learning experience for social work students but also on generating ideas on how best to address the development of values and behaviour through social work education.

Recent research, public inquiries and reviews have suggested that social work education in some cases is falling short of improving the quality of the workforce. Some students struggle to make links between their knowledge, values and beliefs and to demonstrate this learning through their practice. Other research has identified the impact of these demands on students' sense of well-being, suggesting a significant impact of social work education on the person outside the classroom. Social work education it seems has much to learn and to offer in terms of facilitating the learning process for students. I would argue that the development of approaches is required to enable students to maximise their learning in a way that is integral to both their personal and professional development. This needs to be achieved in a way however that acknowledges the impact of social work education on the whole person such as on their sense of well-being. How this can be achieved is a key question for this thesis along with several others which have emerged within this chapter.

Emerging questions

The remaining literature is reviewed with a number of these questions in mind. These are:

1. Can a person's core values change?
2. Are there ethical implications for social work education seeking to change a person's core values?

3. Can a change in values be taught?
4. Is there an impact on the person themselves if their beliefs, values and behaviour are subject to scrutiny and change during this process?
5. Are there models for fostering this development and change in a way that acknowledges this impact?

Chapter two starts the process of responding to these questions. It does this by drawing on educational theory which acknowledges that learning goes beyond the passive acquisition of knowledge and that in depth learning can change a person and their beliefs, character, behaviour and their interaction with their environment in a way that acknowledges personal growth and autonomy. Consideration of the above questions will inform the critical analysis of this literature. The process will also seek to identify any remaining questions for the research and practice development components of this Doctorate.

Chapter two: Underpinning educational theory

Chapter two provides an academic discourse on the relevance of educational approaches to social work which recognise the whole person. I do this initially by providing an overview of the pedagogical approaches of Paul Freire, Carl Rogers and Malcolm Knowles as these are identified within the literature along with Jacques Mezirow as the key authors who recognise the whole person in the learning process (Forbes and Martin 2004; Holistic Education Network 2009; Stack 2011). Such approaches recognise the potential for education and learning to lead to changes and shifts in values and beliefs. They can therefore be explored to consider whether a person's values can change; whether this should be the aim of social work education and how this might happen. A more in depth exploration of the literature relating to Jacques Mezirow and the development of transformative learning theory then forms the basis of the following chapter as I consider how this could enhance the experience for social work students and the outcome of the profession in relation to the development of professional values. The question guiding the discussions throughout both chapters is of what impact this process has on the whole person.

Terminology

The term 'whole person approaches to education' is a term I have developed to refer to any approaches to education which acknowledge the whole person within the context of their lives. I use it to describe education which recognises and seeks to understand individual and unique experiences of learning and to see beyond a one dimensional label such as student or social worker. This is useful when considering whether there is an impact on the whole person when experiencing challenges and changes to their beliefs, values and behaviour.

Paul Freire

Fundamental to a whole person approach to education and the view that education can impact on a person's beliefs, values and behaviour is the work of Paulo Freire, in particular his seminal text, the Pedagogy of the Oppressed, first published in 1970. Freire's work is particularly useful in considering the question of whether we as educators should seek to change a person's core values to align them with those of the profession. Freire wrote widely on his view of education as a path to liberation based initially on his work with a group of illiterate peasants in South America. His role was

to teach adults to read, yet his view of adult education was to foster critical consciousness amongst individuals and groups. He argued that the oppressed must liberate themselves and their oppressors (Freire 2000).

> Only the power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong enough to liberate them both (2000, p.44).

Freire was critical however of how education can be used to oppress by indoctrinating the views of men and women so they adapt to the oppressed society (1993). This is significant in this discussion of whether educators should challenge, assess or seek to change a person's values. It raises the question as to whether this is a form of social control and a technique to further oppress by assuming that the values of the profession or the educator are superior to those of the learner. Freire was critical of what he described as a banking concept of education where students 'are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor' (1993, p.1). He argued that this merely serves to reinforce oppression. Freire was also critical of the oppressor attempting to share power describing this as a false charity given the power that the oppressor still retains (1993).

The role of educators in challenging a person's values therefore should be approached with caution. From Freire's perspective, any change or development of values or beliefs should come from the learner themselves as they become more conscious of their situation (only they can liberate themselves). It can be the role of the educator to raise this consciousness and awareness but for the learner to reach their own conclusions and to seek out their own learning. This can be applied to the social work student and their approach to learning but also to how they approach their social work practice with others. In response to question two set at the end of chapter one, it should not be for the educator to change a person's core values. Due to the oppressive nature of doing so, educators should instead engage in a process of conscious-raising to enable the learner to explore this for themselves.

It is easy to see how the process of 'teaching values' could easily be used to indoctrinate the views of student social workers to adapt to the oppressed society. Despite the strand of social work which promotes the social work role in challenging oppression and discrimination and seeking social change (International Association of Schools of

Social Work and the International Federation of Social Workers 2001), social workers also enforce the social norms and laws of the day and make daily decisions regarding who is entitled to funding, support and services. We make decisions regarding who is most in need; who is at risk to themselves or others; and what action should be taken as a result. The bureaucratic role of social work (Lymbery 2005) as explored in chapter one, is directly informed and restricted by current legislation and policy and by economical, cultural and political beliefs. Social workers are often employed or funded by the state and social work students undertake practice learning in statutory settings where they are required to make decisions and take actions which affect people's lives and liberty. It is the role of social work educators to enable social work students to seek out the evidence base for these decisions and to be explicit and critical of how their own beliefs and values or those of the state have informed this.

Despite Freire's concerns regarding the potential of education to oppress, he also argues the potential for education to liberate. His view of education by those truly committed to liberation is as a mutual process of inquiry (1993, 2000) where the educator recognises men and women as conscious beings and adopts problem posing education from which learners can consider and explore issues in relation to their life and experiences. The goal is of transformation of the world men and women inhabit. He defines critical consciousness as a "process in which learners develop the ability to analyse, pose questions and take action on the social, political, cultural and economic contexts that influence and shape their lives" (2000, p.47). A deepened consciousness enables people to recognise and understand their situation and to take control over it. The role of the educator is not to impart knowledge but to engage in this mutual process; a dialogue to foster critical consciousness (Freire 2000). Educators do this by presenting dilemmas from which to discuss, share, reflect and take action. Whilst values should not be taught, this process of mutual inquiry can be facilitated by educators seeking to raise consciousness and enabling students to think for themselves.

Freire's work reflects the values identified at the start of this thesis. A person is recognised as capable of change and as their own best expert. Power is acknowledged along with the belief that learning should be within the control of the learner. It is for them to find their own meaning.

Freire's work presents a collectivist social action view of learning and the impact that learning can have on a society or group. Learning is for the good of the society as a whole; to challenge the oppressors with the ultimate goal of learning leading to liberation. Its limitation as an approach however is its focus on this shared process. It places little emphasis on individual motivations to learn; "yearning to be free can only be transferred into reality when yearning is aroused in their comrades" (2000, p.47). Consideration of the impact on the person themselves is restricted to this view of conscious-raising in others. As described in chapter one when exploring the reflective and technical rational paradigms, conflict and dissonance between a person's newly found views of the world and the reality of the environment they find themselves in, can cause frustration and disillusionment. Whilst Freire acknowledges this, he views it as part of the change process which leads to action to challenge the oppressive environment. The approach however gives little consideration of the impact of this process on the person or the impact that this experience or transition has on their lives.

A view of adult learning which seeks to acknowledge the individual experience of learning is Carl Rogers's view of self actualisation.

Carl Rogers

Carl Rogers' humanist theory incorporates the concept that individuals have a need to seek out "Who am I?" and "how do I become myself?" (1967, p.123 cited in Ungoed-Thomas1996). It is an approach which focuses specifically on why we learn (Rogers 2002). This is useful when exploring whether it is possible for a person's values to change; whether this should be the role of educators and how this might happen. Rogers suggests that the process of learning is one that is enhanced by context and the person's environment and one which aims for self actualisation and being the 'ideal person'. He describes this as a person who is "ever changing, ever developing; always discovering himself and the newness in himself in each succeeding moment of time" (Rogers 1983, p.295); using the term "optimum psychological growth" (p.295). Whilst arguing that this person does not exist, Rogers believed that this should be the theoretical goal of personal growth achieved through education. It suggests that a person's values and beliefs can change but that this needs to emerge from their own process of self discovery and personal development.

Rogers' work has been criticised for blurring the roles between therapy and education (Jarvis 1983; Ungoed-Thomas 1996) due to this psychological stance but it could be argued that this is due to his recognition of the whole person and the multiple dimensions of self and the requirement for an individual's basic needs to be addressed before successful learning and development can occur. Rogers describes therapy itself as a learning process (Rogers 1951 cited Knowles 1990, p.41) and makes comparisons between this and education which is person centred. He argues that in his mind, "the best of education would produce a person very similar to the one produced by the best of therapy" (Rogers 1983, p.283) due to its shared goal of personal development.

Roger's theory is influenced by the work of Maslow who in 1968 identified self actualisation as the pinnacle of his proposed hierarchy of need (Rogers 1983). The basis of the hierarchy was that each level could only be achieved once the other needs had been met. As with a whole person stance, this model recognises the inter-related aspects of self and the need for one aspect to be addressed or met before another can be achieved. Jarvis (1983, p.46-7) adds a dimension to this, arguing that 'the mind only develops through the learning processes that occur as a result of interaction' and as such suggests the insertion of a person's "need to learn" into Maslow's hierarchy of need before self esteem or self actualisation can be achieved.

This view of interaction supports Freire's notion of shared learning, communication and conscious-raising leading to emancipatory learning. It also acknowledges the notion of integrality (of a person and their environment) in unitary appreciative inquiry (Cowling 2004a, 2004b) and the work of Martha Rogers (1990), which will be explored later within the research chapters in part two. It suggests that values will only change if in response to a person's need to learn. It cannot be imposed by someone else or taught, without the person's openness and willingness for this to happen.

In his recognition of the learner's search for "who am I and how do I become myself?" (1967, p.123 cited in Ungoed-Thomas1996), Rogers identified adult learners as self initiating; arguing that only self discovered learning will significantly affect behaviour (Rogers 2002). He characterised the distinctions as personal involvement, whole person, self initiated, pervasive and self evaluated (Rogers 1983 cited in Rogers 2002, p.125) as opposed to more conventional methods of teaching such as lecturing, standardised testing and instructor evaluated learning. To this aim, like Freire, he identified the role

of the educator as facilitating the learning process rather than imparting knowledge. The learner is instrumental to the process of learning ensuring a more personalised and meaningful experience.

There are potentially a number of benefits to self initiated, self discovery methods of learning as opposed to more traditional models of lecturer directed, didactic teaching and assessment. Learning becomes internalised as the learner explores the meaning and relevance for them and their own lives. It resonates with Schon's view of reflecting in and on action and learning to think for oneself (1996). By exploring issues and relating these to themselves, learners are more likely to achieve an increased awareness of their own values and beliefs and the impact these have on their decisions and behaviour. It could also achieve the greater emphasis on enabling learners to link theory to practice as called for by the Social Work Taskforce (2009). Students learn to apply their learning from different contexts to another by asking what the meaning is for them or for their practice. Rather than seeking to change a person's values or teach a person what values they should have, it provides a stronger argument for education seeking to raise awareness amongst learners of their beliefs and values from which they themselves can explore, question and reflect.

Freire's and Roger's models of learning provide arguments of the benefits to self and to the community of conscious-raising, developing awareness, and of the process of seeking out an understanding of one's own life and role within society. They identify that it is possible for a person's values and beliefs to change and that there are benefits of such changes occurring. It can lead to liberation, emancipation, personal development and striving to improve oneself and one's situation. Both models argue for this process to be as a result of self discovery and self directed learning so as not to oppress (Freire 2000) and so the learning is meaningful (Rogers 1983). This process is facilitated by the lecturer rather than led by a more traditional process of the lecturer imparting knowledge.

Malcolm Knowles

Freire's and Roger's models of learning are very much in line with the work of Knowles in the late 1970's and onwards in his development of the notion of andragogy: a theory of how adults learn (Knowles 1990). Knowles argued that for adults, learning needs to be purposeful, to draw on previous experiences, to recognise their readiness to learn and

their orientation to learning (what is relevant to their life) and to recognise what motivates them to learn (Knowles 1990). As with Rogers, Knowles placed much emphasis on self (Jarvis 1983; Sutherland 1998). Like Freire and Rogers, he viewed adult learning as a "process of active inquiry, not passive reception of transmitted content" (Knowles 1990; p.27). He argued that adult learning was achieved when an adult sought to "discover new knowledge through intuition and the analysis of experience" (p29). He characterised the adult learner as self directed; a resource for their own learning; possessing a readiness to learn which is dependent on other commitments and demands; able to apply knowledge instantly resulting in problem centred rather than subject centred learning (Sutherland 1998).

These characteristics of adult learning are also congruent with the National Occupational Standards for Social Work; their underpinning value requirements; the codes of practice and the statement of expectations of people who use social work services and their carers (Skills for Care 2002). They resonate with the Reform Board's proposed Professional Capabilities Framework (2011) and Munro's (2011) focus on exercising professional judgment as discussed in the previous chapter.

Knowles's adult learning theory has received criticism however, particularly when first published in 1973, partly due to its initial claim that it was distinct from pedagogy (which he defined as the teaching of children). This has led to discussion on what distinguishes the adult learner from the child learner (Jarvis 1983; Knowles 1990), leading to later claims from Knowles' that the two are not mutually exclusive as many of the characteristics, for example applying knowledge to previous experience, could be applied to the child learner and would not always apply to the adult learner.

Androgogy remains however as one of the fundamental adult learning theories as it places the learner at the centre of the process, promoting autonomy, independence and self directed learning which is recognised as meaningful, particularly in seeking changes to values, beliefs and behaviour as is the focus for discussion within this thesis. Whilst Knowles' theory of adult learning has been criticised for not exploring the psychological implications for the learner (Jarvis 1983) for example, *why* adult learners want to learn, it has provided educators and learners with a model to understand *how* adults learn. From this, educators can facilitate meaningful, in depth learning which acknowledges the whole person, their experience and the context in which they are

learning. It incorporates the core values identified at the beginning of this thesis and provides a model from which to develop approaches to adult education which acknowledge and engage the whole person.

Conclusion

There are many shared themes between the works of Freire, Rogers and Knowles. Not least the change in role of the educator from one who imparts knowledge to passive learners, to one who facilitates the learning, conscious-raising, analysis, reflections and actions of learners. The approaches suggest that values cannot and should not be taught but the process of exploring personal and professional values and the impact of these on learning and practice should be facilitated. The educator and student seek to create a mutual and reciprocated process of learning. Whilst the educator may pose questions, foster critical reflection and enable learners to recognise the purpose and value of their learning, they do not have the answers. Knowledge is recognised as ambiguous, flexible, evolving and subjective. It is for these reasons that they underpin approaches to social work education which seek to develop autonomous thinkers who can adapt their knowledge and their practice to an ever changing environment. The theories support the development not only of the person's knowledge base but their personal and professional development as a practitioner who is able to meet the demands of the profession.

Another theory of adult learning based on these shared themes is Mezirow's transformative learning theory. This offers a systematic process to explain *how* learning occurs and the role of educators in fostering this learning. It is identified as the key educational theory underpinning this thesis due to its focus on learning as transformation and its particular emphasis on perspective change and the transformation of beliefs, values and behaviour.

The following chapter provides a literature review of transformative learning theory in relation to social work education.

Chapter three: Transformative learning theory: a review of the literature in relation to social work education.

A range of literature is explored within this chapter to establish the relevance of transformative learning theory (TLT) as the key underpinning educational theory for this research study. As with the educational approaches previously described, TLT acknowledges the impact of learning on the whole person within the context of their lives. It is congruent with the professional values identified at the start of this thesis as it enables the learner to retain control over the learning process. Particular emphasis is placed by TLT on the impact learning has on a person's beliefs, values and behaviour and how these can become more open to the views of others. It has the potential therefore to provide an effective model in enabling social work students to meet the demands of the profession and the requirements of the social work degree in developing as competent, reflective and analytical practitioners who place the service user at the heart of the process.

The potential of TLT is discussed within this chapter in relation to:

- what transformative learning theory is
- how it has been developed
- how transformative learning is achieved
- the use of TLT in university education and
- implications for educators, in particular social work educators

Reflections are incorporated throughout regarding how TLT and the literature reviewed can inform my own understanding of the learning process and how this can be used to enhance this experience for students.

Transformative learning theory

Transformative learning theory as developed by Mezirow and associates is 'the most researched and discussed theory in the field of adult education' (Taylor 2007, p.173). Mezirow (2003, p.11) describes it as "the essence of adult education". Building on Schon's 1974 notion of reflection in and on action (Schon 1999), transformative learning theory explores how learning processes occur. It acknowledges that learning from critical reflection has the power to change a person's thoughts, beliefs, values,

purpose and subsequent actions. Mezirow states that it can be understood as "the epistemology of how adults learn to think for themselves rather than act upon the assimilated beliefs, values, feelings and judgments of others" (2003, p.1). As such it can be argued as fundamental to models of adult education which seek to develop autonomous thinkers and practitioners such as in social work education.

Transformative learning is not however restricted to formal education. As Taylor (2008, p.5) suggests, change is continuous and it is imperative that as adults we develop a "more critical worldview as we seek ways to better understand our world". Education is viewed as enabling quality of life (O'Sullivan 2003). It can occur outside of the formal learning environment as a result of any event or accumulation of events that lead us to view the world in a different way, for example a personal crisis such as a bereavement or job loss (Cranton 2006; Taylor 2008). O'Sullivan and Taylor (2004, p.22) widen the concept of educators to include

> Those who enable our learning – colleagues, friends, neighbours, parents, children, organisational leaders, spiritual leaders, artists, researchers, teachers, mentors – especially those who enable us to learn as we live and work and inspire us to a life of inquiry, openness and discernment.

Transformative learning affects the whole person; how they see the world and how they live their life.

TLT encapsulates the notion of perspective transformation or a change to a person's frame of reference to one which is "more inclusive, differentiating, permeable, critically reflective and integrative of experience" (Mezirow 1996, p.163). As such, it argues that the goal of education to seek to raise the learner's awareness of their own values and enable them to recognise, question and reflect on these is a desirable one. The view is taken that we make meaning of our experiences by drawing on our existing knowledge; previous experiences; what we have learnt from others and our frame of reference or mindset. The meaning we make is what makes us who we are. Mezirow defines a frame of reference as the "structures of assumptions through which we understand our experiences" (1997, p.5). This includes our "values, affective dispositions, moral and aesthetic preferences, paradigms, learning preferences and sense of self" (Mezirow 2003, p.2).

Our values and assumptions are shaped by our community, work, family, friends, colleagues, personal preferences and personalities (Cranton and King 2003; O'Sullivan and Taylor 2004). As a result these tend to be based on the implicit, unwritten rules of our own culture and as such we often fail to recognise that these are not universal norms (Lee and Greene 2003). Mezirow argues that engaging in critical reflection can enable us to challenge these views, beliefs and understandings and develop ones which are more "true and justified" (2003, p.2) and which can lead to new perspectives and insight which are more open to the views of others. Significantly for professional education, focus is not just on a person's change of values, purpose or frame of reference but on how the person acts on these insights (Mezirow 1996, 1997, 2003).

Transformative learning theory and social work education

The emphasis on acting on insight gained is significant to social work education and practice. It acknowledges the requirement for students to be aware of and reflect on their own beliefs and values and to challenge the truth of these by questioning what their views are based on and to make changes to their practice as a result. Lee and Greene (2003) for example, discuss transformative leaning in relation to multi-cultural social work education. They identify how "students from different cultural backgrounds will have different assumptions about reality" (p5) and that when this reality is taken for granted and unquestioned, students will often assume that their world view is true and is shared by all others regardless of their background. Social work education should enable learners to examine, question, expand and transform these taken for granted assumptions (Lee and Greene 2003).

I can relate this to my own experience as a social work educator where students have made generalisations or statements which they perceive to be universal beliefs. There are many examples including the assumption that everyone agrees that older people should retire from work; that disabled people are best supported within day centres; that family should come first; that older students are more mature or experienced than younger students; that everyone's motivations for becoming a social worker are the same. Students are encouraged to consider these views, seek alternative view points and to recognise the complexity, the ambiguity and the lack of concrete answers when exploring a particular issue or belief.

The process of transformative learning involves a person making changes to their behaviour and their practice based on the resulting shifts in thinking or frames of reference. It acknowledges the need for their learning to inform their practice and for subsequent practice to inform their learning. It recognises the non static nature of knowing. Education is identified as needing to recognise reflexivity rather than relying solely on more static competence or technical models of teaching and learning as explored in chapter one on the current social work context. It is this dual process of learning informing practice and practice informing learning that enables the ongoing transfer of learning throughout the social worker's career when presented with an infinite number of situations or issues and for social workers to 'think for themselves' (Ringel 2003; Rai 2006; Clare 2007; Harrison 2009; Guransky et al 2010; Lay and McGuire 2010; Wehbi and Straka 2011; Chow et al 2011). Failure to do so can result in what Cranton and King (2003, p.32), describe as "nothing more than automatons following a dubious set of rules and principles"; what Freire would describe as banking (1993); concepts which fail to acknowledge an ever changing context and the role of self.

It is not always the case that views will change or transform. An encounter, for example with a feminist or anti-racist stance may result in the learner clarifying what they already think or believe (Scott 1997). As the international definition of social work recognises, it is the social workers role to "promote social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being" (IFSW 2001, p.1). Students must therefore understand how socialisation and learning can both sustain oppression and promote empowerment and liberation (Freire 1993, 2000), if they are to recognise oppression and develop appropriate strategies and interventions. An encounter or a disorientating dilemma may precipitate this change or clarify the need for action.

The transformative learning process as developed by Mezirow

Mezirow identified ten phases of the transformative learning process which he argued occur as an adult seeks to clarify meaning:

1. A disorientating dilemma
2. Self examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt or shame
3. A critical assessment of assumptions

4. Recognition of one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships and actions
6. Planning a course of action
7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
8. Provisional trying of one's roles
9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated to by one's new perspective.

(Mezirow 2003, p.4)

The phases provide a useful structure to identify what transformative learning may look like; how it might happen and as criteria to evaluate whether transformative learning has occurred. I can identify moments in my own learning and development where perspective change has occurred for me in this way during my own social work education. This process however has been critiqued within the literature for being too rational and linear (Cranton 2002; Merriam and Ntseane 2008; Merriam and Kim 2008; Walton 2010). Merriam and Ntseane (2008) explore how culture shapes the process of transformative learning and comment on how the rational thinking required of Mezirow's ten phases of transformation is essentially a Western concept. Cranton (2002) suggests that it is not a linear process but that there is some progression to it such as starting with a disorientating dilemma and ending with restored equilibrium. Walton (2010) dismisses the linear or mechanistic process arguing that like other forms of growth it is contextual and multi-dimensional and the ways that learners engage in the process cannot be prescriptive. Whilst there is consensus in the literature regarding the potential for learning to transform a person's values and beliefs, there are many views on how this happens.

The transformative learning process as developed by others

Taylor (2008) identifies a number of alternative views of transformative learning theory emerging from the literature in addition to what he describes as Mezirow's psycho critical perspective. These have retained the basic premise of Mezirow's theory but explored and suggested different perspectives in order to expand its relevance and application in different fields. Taylor (2008) categorises these as psycho-analytical; psycho-developmental; social-emancipatory; neurobiological, cultural-spiritual, race-

centric and planetary views. Each reflects differences in focus such as on the individual person in the first three and views which acknowledge context and social change such as interconnectivity with the environment in the last three. They all have a resonance on some level with the common threads within this thesis: social work values; whole person approaches to education and the indivisible nature of human beings as incorporated into the conceptual framework of unitary appreciative inquiry (Cowling 2001, 2004a, 2004b, 2005 and Cowling and Repede 2010) which is explored in part two. I draw on each of these views as I consider the questions posed at the end of chapter one by exploring:

- how and why transformative learning might happen
- what impact transformative learning has on the whole person and
- models for fostering this development and change in a way that acknowledges this impact.

The psycho-analytical view of transformative learning, for example, reflects the lifelong journey of coming to understand oneself. This resonates with Carl Roger's humanistic view which identifies an individual's need to seek out: who am I? The psycho-developmental perspective views the whole lifespan and reflects on continuous, incremental and progressive growth. This also resonates with Carl Roger's concept of self actualisation (1983). Merriam and Kim (2008) however request caution of views which focus on self and personal development. They argue that they are unlikely to be recognised by collectivist cultures such as those in African communities unless the view recognises communal motivations for learning such as for the good of the community. Taylor (2008) argues that the psycho-developmental view acknowledges epistemological change (how we construct meaning as well as what knowledge we have) and recognises the role of context, relationships and different types of knowing otherwise missing from Mezirow's view of transformative learning.

The social-emancipatory view is based on the work of Friere's (1993) Pedagogy of the Oppressed, as previously discussed and the need to continually reflect and make changes in order to create a more equitable place to live (Taylor 2008). It has been argued that it is the economic, political and social structures which influence a person's consciousness most (Inglis 1998). This is clear in Freire's work and his criticism of the use of education to indoctrinate those who are oppressed (1993). Inglis (1998) argues

that as a result, challenges to these structures are more effective in seeking emancipation than challenges to our own thoughts and views, although Freire would argue that this needs to start with conscious-raising amongst individuals and groups. According to Inglis (1998) failure to change society at a structural level will result in any changes to self being limited by these societal, economic and political constraints. Social movements such as women's liberation and the disability movement are examples of this. The social-emancipatory view, resonates with the social action strand of social work (as described by Lymbery 2005) and the purpose of social work to challenge discrimination, disadvantage, inequality and injustice by seeking social change in addition to focussing on the needs of the individual (International Association of Schools of Social work and the International Federation of Social Workers 2001; Skills for Care 2002; Social Work Reform Board 2010). The view is that people must understand power in order to be free (Friere 1993; Inglis 1998).

A model of transformative learning which resonates most with the conceptual framework of a unitary appreciative inquiry which will guide the method of this study is described by Taylor (2008) as the planetary view. Developed by O'Sullivan (1999, 2002, 2003 cited in Taylor 2008) it recognises the individual from a planetary and ecological dimension as well as a socio-political one. The aim of transformation in this case is in relation to our integrality with our physical environment. Changes to our frames of reference and mindsets need to recognise this wider more holistic view of our relationship with the world. O'Sullivan and his colleague Marilyn Taylor (2004) suggest that our relationships go beyond those with our selves, family and community and extend to wider groups of people, nations, earth and the universe. This wider context is relevant in understanding how a person makes sense of the world around them and how they develop their values and beliefs. The notion of integrality provides a useful conceptual framework from which to explore the impact of social work education on the whole person within the context of their lives. This is discussed further in part two when considering the use of unitary appreciative inquiry (Cowling 2004a) which is underpinned by this concept.

These categories demonstrate a wide range of perspectives in relation to transformative learning. Cranton (2006) argues that how transformative learning is viewed will depend largely on who the learner is and the context in which their leaning takes place. She suggests that it depends on the nature of the disorientating dilemma which could be the

loss of a loved one or objections to a war where the same individual may decide on different responses such as quiet reflection or social action. I would also argue that the perspectives demonstrated within the literature will often depend on the premise on which the author bases their own views and what they have identified as a shortfall in the model as proposed by Mezirow.

Taylor (1997, 2001, 2006, 2007 and 2008) has extensively reviewed the literature and research into TLT and identifies a number of criticisms within the literature of Mezirow's model. In 1998, these included "the role of context; the varying nature of catalysts of transformative learning; the increase role of other ways of knowing and the importance of relationships" (p.174). These areas are addressed in this study as different types of knowing are explored (Heron 1996) and the impact on a person's life are considered. Much of the literature since has also sought to address these areas. When Taylor revisited this review in 2007 to look at empirical research about transformative learning theory between 1999 and 2005, he identified a number of studies which focussed on aspects such as the significance of relationships and of transformative learning leading to action. Of particular interest to this thesis are the studies he identifies as exploring the practice of fostering transformative learning which highlight the importance of "learning experiences that are direct, personally engaging and stimulate reflection upon experience" (Taylor 2007, p.182). These studies along with a further 21 I have identified are useful to this review as they identify effective practice in enabling transformative learning to occur. These are explored in the remainder of this chapter to establish the pre-requisites for transformative learning; and the implications for educators, for social work education and for this study.

Pre-requisites for achieving transformative learning

Critical reflection

According to Mezirow (1997, p.9) "becoming critically reflective of one's own assumptions is the key to transforming one's taken for granted frame of reference, an indispensible dimension of learning for adapting to change". He argues that it involves engaging in discourse to arrive at a best judgment. The need for critical reflection and reflective discourse as a means of achieving perspective transformation is well established and accepted in a wide range of the literature (Ettling and Hayes 1997; Pilling-Cormick 1997; Von Kotze and Cooper 2000; Lee and Greene 2003; Merriam

2004; Lin and Cranton 2005; Cranton 2006; Taylor 2007; Rush 2008; Bernhardt 2009; Grise-Owens 2010; Walton 2010). It is recognised that simply acquiring information (Grabove 1997) or having an experience (Criticos 1993 cited Merriam 2004) is not enough. New information needs to be understood and manipulated (Grabove 1997).

In relation to critical reflection, Mezirow identifies three categories; content reflection, process reflection and premise reflection. Critical reflection on content and process is described as focussing on task centred problem solving, commonly on methods and procedures (Mezirow 1990) which can be addressed by instrumental learning (learning how to do something). Mezirow suggests that this can lead to transformations in points of view (Mezirow 2003). Essentially it leads to seeing the situation differently. In social work this could relate to our views on what works in practice such as a particular approach or model of intervention. It can lead to improvements in our practice, choosing interventions based on our experience of what works; on best evidence; and in seeking better outcomes for those involved.

Mezirow argues that critical reflection on premise (the whole basis on which our views, beliefs and values are held) is different. Critical reflection on premise can lead to much greater change and can lead to transformation of habits of mind that inform our view of the world. Using the example of the women's movement in the 1960's, Mezirow comments on how women on mass questioned their roles as housewives (Mezirow 1990). Critical reflection on premise also applies to the work of Friere (1993, 2005) with illiterate workers on a reading programme as discussed in chapter two through the process of conscious-raising or conscientization. Mezirow (1990, 2003) argues that changes to habits of mind can be achieved through communicative learning where rather than learning how to do something; learners seek to understand. The distinction I make between instrumental and communicable learning is that communicable learning affects the whole person not just their knowledge of the tasks or job they undertake. In relation to social work education, it enables someone to develop a sense of self and an identity which incorporates that of a social worker in addition to learning how to do social work.

Critical reflection on premise can lead to substantial changes to our values, beliefs and behaviour and has the potential to be life changing. In response to the question posed at the end of chapter one as to whether a person's values can change, there is significant

evidence within the literature to demonstrate that these changes take place. In response to whether these can be taught, or indeed facilitated, there are many factors considered to increase the likelihood of this occurring (Ettling and Hayes 1997; Pilling-Cormick 1997; Von Kotze and Cooper 2000; Lee and Greene 2003; Cranton and King 2003; Lin and Cranton 2005; Cranton 2006; Taylor 2007; Affolter et al 2009; Bernhardt 2009; Grise-Owens 2010; Walton 2010). These are explored later in this chapter when providing a review of the literature in relation to how transformative learning happens. The substantial changes resulting from critical reflection on premise is relevant to the overall question posited by this thesis of whether social work education can be life changing. TLT would suggest that if there is a transformation of habits of mind then it is life changing.

Individuation

In addition to critical reflection as a pre-requisite for transformative learning, there is an argument that transformative learning requires a level of individuation (as developed by Jung 1971 cited in Cranton and King 2003; Lin and Cranton 2005). Jung developed a view of the whole person which was both indivisible and distinct from the general collective psychology. I explore in part two of this thesis how this view resonates with Martha Roger's (1990) and Cowling's (2004b) views of the indivisible nature of human beings which inform the methodology of this research study.

Cranton and King based on Jung's view, suggest that to question assumptions and norms we must be able to see ourselves as separate to others as with Mezirow's example of women housewives and Freire's example of 'the oppressed' questioning their roles within society. Jung argued that we require a sense of self that enables us to either differentiate or associate ourselves from or with others and to re-group according to these refinements. A level of authenticity is required (a genuine expression of self) to make choices based on who we are (Cranton and King 2003). Support is required to enable learners to "rebuild connections between the individual, family, education and society, find their own voices, build their own identities and gain confidence" (Lin and Cranton 2005, p.458). The aim is to enable learners to find their own path, a principle which resonates with the professional values underpinning this thesis and the models of adult learning proposed by Rogers (1983) and Knowles (1990) in that it supports unique, self directed, autonomous learning. The aim is for individuals, with support, to find what works, what is important and what has meaning for them.

Heightened cognitive development

As already mentioned, there is widespread acceptance within the literature that transformative learning only occurs as a result of critical reflection (Ettling and Hayes 1997; Pilling-Cormick 1997; Von Kotze and Cooper 2000; Lee and Greene 2003; Lin and Cranton 2005; Cranton 2006; Taylor 2007; Bernhardt 2009; Grise-Owens 2010; Walton 2010), in particular premise reflection (Mezirow 1990, 2003). Merriam (2004, p.60) identifies that to critically reflect and engage in rational discourse, the learner must have a "mature level of cognitive functioning". Whilst some research has claimed that age did not appear to be a factor (Rush 2008), learners must be able to question their assumptions, consider other view points and decide on a best judgment (Mezirow 2000). Merriam (2004) draws on a range of models of cognitive development such as Piaget (1972) and Kegan (1994) to demonstrate that this level of cognitive ability only happens in the later stages of cognitive maturity and as such may only apply to half of the adult population or to formally educated adults over the age of 30. This is significant when considering transformative learning in professional education with students who are likely to be younger than this. As Erickson (2007, p.77) comments, this assertion "places the possibility of transformational learning out of reach (or over the heads) of many learners".

This view however is contradicted by the work of Freire. His work involved a process of conscious-raising with illiterate adults in both urban and rural settings. He describes accounts of transformative learning as adults sought to question their situation and to engage in critical reflection and discourse to find meaning in their lives (Freire 1993, 2005). It suggests that the ability to critically reflect is not restricted to those who have reached a higher level of formal education. It may be that wisdom and intuitive types of knowing are also factors.

In her study of peer instructors in learning in retirement programmes, Erickson (2007) found that the participants had achieved all ten of Mezirow's stages of transformative learning by choosing to engage in the programme as a response to their feelings regarding their own retirement. This change however was not necessarily articulated in their interview as their ability to articulate and critically reflect on this perspective change was found to be consistent with their capacity to make meaning from their experiences. Erickson (2007) challenges educators to explore ways of facilitating

transformative learning within these varying levels. Lee and Greene (2003) do just this. Their framework proposes a model which seeks to identify and work from the learner's starting point. Other literature focuses on transformative learning within schools with models of transformative learning being used with children with positive outcomes regarding engagement, motivation and transformative learning (Pearson and Somekh 2006). This suggests that lower cognitive function does not exclude learners from transformative learning at some level.

The need for critical reflection

Freire's (1993, 2005), Erickson's (2007); Lee and Greene (2003) and Person and Somekh's (2006) studies reflect a debate within the literature regarding whether critical reflection and engaging in discourse is the only way that transformative learning can happen. Some of the literature disputes this claim; supporting the view that transformative learning can occur in people without being aware of the change process (for example Elias 1997; Scott 1997; Friere 1973 in Merriam 2004; Erickson 2007). These alternative views are discussed here.

Discernment

It is argued that in addition to critical reflection and engaging in discourse, transformative learning can occur through processes of discernment and mindless assimilation. The first, discernment is a meditative act which involves facilitating interaction between the conscious and unconscious mind, bringing internal images into conscious awareness and attempting to relate to them (Scott 1997). Meaning emerges from the unconscious; a form of intuition. Learning can be achieved through appreciation rather than criticism (Elias 1997). The process can be experienced when in an almost sleep like state when images surface into the cognitive mind encouraging focus on a particular aspect of one's life. It can be a conscious act to meditate and to engage with the images. It still involves processing the information rather than merely acquiring it, but it does not require discourse or critical analysis and reflection to make meaning.

Scott (1997) argues that images emerging through discernment are more potent and powerful than those emerging from rational thought. It leads me to wonder if such processes are more prevalent within particular cultures that are practised in the skill of meditation. It provides a less Westernised and rational process for transformative

learning to occur and could explain some of the examples of transformative learning being achieved by those who have not consciously engaged in critical reflection and discourse such as in Erickson's (2007) study. Whilst dominant within some cultures, discernment is only acknowledged in some of the literature with the majority of authors favouring the more rational, westernised approach which assumes the need for critical reflection and discourse.

Mindless assimilation

The second suggestion of how transformative learning can occur without critical reflection is that of mindless assimilation. This does not require a conscious process such as critical reflection or discernment. Despite Mezirow's emphasis on critical reflection and discourse as essential requirements, he does acknowledge that mindless assimilation where transformation is not a conscious act can occur. He provides the example of "moving to a different culture and uncritically assimilating its canon, norms and ways of thinking" (Mezirow 2000, p.21; Merriam 2004). If it is uncritical however, I question whether it is any different from the assimilation he refers to throughout a person's life on which our frames of reference are based. These too are likely to have been subject to change as we have unquestioningly taken on board the views of others which in turn have led to changes in our behaviour. Whilst these changes may be positive, open and permeable ones, Mezirow's definition of transformational learning is when individuals learn to think for themselves rather than to act on these assimilated, taken for granted beliefs.

Reflections on the implications for my own practice as an educator

Freire's (1993, 2005); Erickson's (2007); Lee and Greene (2003) and Person and Somekh's (2006) studies do provide evidence that transformation can occur without conscious critical reflection or engagement in academic discourse. Erickson argues that the resulting perspective change can still be a permanent one. This does lead me to reflect and make meaning based on this information in relation to my own work with social work students. In my experience students often assimilate to the cultural and value norms of the group; learning to 'think like a social worker'. The change is not always conscious and students, particularly those with less experience and maturity often struggle to articulate changes as with the peer instructors in Erickson's (2007) study. I am reminded of a number of students who show a transformation through their degree, developing an identity which is underpinned by the values of the social work

profession, becoming more open to the views and beliefs of others. They demonstrate sensitive and caring practice; achieve positive outcomes for people they are working with; and receive excellent feedback from colleagues and service users. Often however, they struggle to pass their placement because of an inability to critically reflect and articulate the knowledge and theory which informs their practice. On these occasions, practice is often intuitive, "I'm not sure why I did it; it just felt right". On reflection they may have been engaging in a process of mindless assimilation but as it hasn't resulted in a conscious process of critical reflection and analysis, it not deemed as consciously competent and is judged in regards to social work education assessment as inferior to being able to engage in critical discourse.

I recognise that my belief is that whilst transformation can occur without the person being aware of the change process (for example through a process of discernment), I do view conscious transformation stemming from critical reflection and discourse as demonstrative of in depth learning which is more likely to lead to an irreversible perspective change. I realise that I must therefore view unconscious transformation as surface learning which is less likely to become embedded. This is not however what the research in this review has shown. My belief stems from my previously unchallenged view that it is only a conscious awareness of shifts in frames of reference, that will prevent further shifts or assimilation occurring in the future to beliefs which are less open or permeable. I believe this is what stops someone from drifting and losing sight of the inclusive values and beliefs they have gained. I base this on my view that there are social workers in practice who have lost sight of their core values and are not as open to the views of others. This too is based on an assumption however that transformation had occurred in the first place when perhaps their views have not changed and that no process conscious or otherwise had taken place. It could be argued that they remain unconsciously incompetent.

Engaging in critical reflection has enabled me to recognise these beliefs and assumptions and identify on what premise these views are based. I am able to question the truth of my beliefs and consider whether these are due to my own pre-conceptions and judgments regarding the value I place on different types of knowing (such as conscious or intuitive) within professional education. This contradicts the emphasis I place in my own practice on practice wisdom and intuition. These are qualities that I value in others when making judgments about their effectiveness as practitioners. This

process of critical reflection has enabled me to surface a tension between this and my role as an assessor and as a gate keeper to the profession. In this role I realise that I am looking for competence, knowledge and understanding which is tangible and measurable such as the ability to articulate changes in perspectives or to identify the premise on which beliefs are based. My assumption is that this is more effective in terms of professional education and the development of individuals who can think for themselves and can meet the requirements of the profession as identified in chapter one.

Some of this tension emerges from the requirement for me as an educator to consider transformative learning within a formal learning environment such as social work education at degree level. The requirements of the social work programme for which I am lecturer are for perspective changes, views and values to be explicitly acknowledged and expressed, often through verbal dialogue in tutorials or supervision, written assignments or presentations. This is in part due to the need to assess the students' level of understanding and to meet the requirements of the National Occupational Standards for social work and a degree level of study but is also based on my assumption that this demonstrates a more in depth level of learning. I am starting to consider whether this is the case. If feedback from those working alongside a social work student in practice considers their practice to be competent, perhaps this should be enough. Perhaps failing to recognise this as a valid demonstration of a person's ability to think for themselves and engage in transformative learning is to adopt a rationalised, westernised approach which can only be achieved by western students over 30 who have achieved a mature level of cognitive functioning.

The social work literature explored in chapter one on the social work context identifies shortfalls of students effectively engaging in critical reflection particularly in relation to understanding power and oppression at a structural level. For some students this level of critical reflection is currently "out of their reach" (to use Erickson's (2007) phrase). Perhaps rationalised approaches to teaching and learning which focus on the student's ability to critically reflect to demonstrate their learning, go some way to explaining why. Perhaps by being more open to other processes of developing and demonstrating transformative learning, such as discernment and assimilation (Elias 1997; Scott 1997; Merriam 2004) and by using different types of knowing to enable learners to view their situation such as through conscious-raising (Freire 1993, 2005), more effective teaching and learning strategies could be developed. This could better enable transformative

learning to happen and for learners to develop the skills and awareness to develop the ability to critically reflect at a later stage.

My own learning

Critically reflecting on knowledge gained has enabled me to draw a number of conclusions regarding my own practice and to identify areas I wish to develop further within this doctoral study. The process of critical reflection and engaging in discourse can lead to transformative learning and should be encouraged as a skill to develop within social work education. It has many benefits for the learner in enabling them to surface links, identify beliefs, values and behaviour and to explore the premise on which these are based. It can lead to more permeable, open, and inclusive beliefs which are valued within the social work profession which seeks to challenge injustice and work with those most in need.

I am able to conclude from my own reflections however that critical reflection and discourse is not the only way in which transformative learning can be achieved. Social work education which seeks to develop social workers with the values of the profession should also acknowledge other processes by actively exploring and evaluating other methods of achieving this goal. This could involve drawing on teaching strategies and models of learning which acknowledge and value different types of knowing.

There are questions which the literature reviewed here, fails to answer in relation to professional education. It is important to explore whether there is a difference between a person's practice and the outcomes for the profession of learners who have engaged in critical reflection and discourse and those who have not. It would be useful to consider whether integrating the two enables learners to seek ways of challenging their own views and beliefs in a way that is meaningful for them.

The remainder of this chapter explores the literature in relation to recognising and measuring whether transformative learning has occurred and the strategies and models in place to foster this within professional education.

Measuring whether transformative learning has occurred

A number of studies within the literature use Mezirow's ten phases to identify whether transformative learning has occurred. Rush (2008, p.536) draws on this and the work of

Brookfield (1987) to devise her own criteria for identifying the occurrence of transformational learning as a result of service user involvement within mental health nursing teaching sessions. As with most models, it includes the occurrence of critical reflection as a measure. These were:

- Engaging in self examination and expressing feelings associated with their own practice, such as feeling guilty about past actions.
- Describing new knowledge/insight gained
- Reflection on own or other's practice without specific reference to own feelings
- Critical reflection on the power relationships associated with professionals and service users
- Changes in assumptions/attitudes about people with mental health problems
- Engaging in dialogue with others about the meaning of the service user sessions
- Planning future action related to information gained from the service user sessions
- Describing specific action taken as a result of the service user sessions.

Whilst all 26 students in Rush's (2008) study described some benefits, 12 were identified as having undergone transformative learning based on meeting all of the above criteria. Unfortunately little consideration is given as to why this was not the case for all. This provides useful learning however in relation to a social work education context both in terms of identifying the effectiveness of using meaningful "disorientating dilemmas" (Mezirow 2003, p.4) such as the lived experience of others but also as a mechanism for identifying the nature of transformative learning and what this may look like. It is the students' responses to the new information or insight gained that is important. Whilst it requires a conscious process, it can enable students to recognise and articulate this change thus facilitating their own critical reflection and transformative learning and meeting the academic and professional requirements of demonstrating learning within a social work qualifying degree programme.

Implications for educators: facilitating transformative learning

Much of the literature including papers authored by Mezirow, identify guidance for educators in creating the conditions required to foster transformative learning. Whilst the emphasis differs depending on their view of learning and the pre-requisites required,

they all demonstrate similar principles and approaches to creating a positive learning environment which is conducive to transformative learning.

Enabling the learner.

Enabling the learner to engage in transformative learning involves supporting learners to become aware of their assumptions; enabling them to practice recognising frames of reference and identifying alternative perspectives (Mezirow 1997). Mezirow advises educators to assist learners to participate in discourse due to his view that this is an essential component in transformative learning. He suggests that learners participate more freely in discourse when they have accurate and complete information; are freer from coercion; open to alternative viewpoints; able to be objective; able to critically reflect on own assumptions; and are willing to accept resulting best judgment until new perspectives or arguments are encountered (Mezirow 2003). A fundamental principle of adult learning theory is that it is based on self directed learning (Rogers 1983; Mezirow 1990; Knowles 1990; Pilling-Cormick 1997; Cranton 2006) where learners are enabled to identify their own needs and strategies for meeting them. Transferring responsibility from the traditional teacher to learners can result in increased motivation even by child learners who have been shown to be more likely to take ownership (Pearson and Somekh 2006). Essentially learners are encouraged to develop autonomous thinking and to find their own path. Learning is acknowledged as coming from as wide a range of sources not only from formal educators (O'Sullivan and Taylor 2004).

With regards to the impact on the whole person that engaging in transformative learning can have, the literature does recognise that encouraging independent learning, engaging in discourse and taking ownership can be unsettling to some students. It can affect their sense of safety particularly for those in pursuit of 'the right answer' and whose habit of mind and frames of reference guide them to believe that the educator has the knowledge and that this should be taught to the student (Cranton 2002; Lin and Cranton 2005; Grise-Owens et al 2010; Walton 2010). This was evident in Walton's study for example when one student expressed frustration at "not being able to resolve anything" at the end of a complex analysis and discussion. Others wanted more structure and for the teacher to "exert more control" (Walton 2010, p.16). Whilst recognising the need for learners to adapt to a new style of learning for them, fostering transformative learning within education also needs to be done in an emotionally safe environment (Lee and Greene 2003; Taylor 2006; Walton 2010) so as not to create defensiveness or distress.

Distress resulting from the process of transformation may well form part of the impact of education on the whole person. This impact however, is an area that is largely absent from the literature other than its focus on creating a safe and trusting environment. Impact on the person outside of the classroom warrants further consideration and is explored within this research study.

Transformative learning: making it happen

Environment

Transformative learning is perhaps more likely to occur if the learner has a personal interest, perceptions of conflict and developmental readiness (Walton 2010) and a perception of themselves that is distinct from the collective psychology (viewing themselves as different) enabling the learner to think for themselves (Cranton and King 2003). Educators should seek to ensure an environment which is safe and supportive by promoting security, trust and empathy and which places emphasis on establishing meaningful and genuine relationships with students (Lee and Greene 2003; Cranton 2006; Grise-Owens et al 2010; Walton 2010). Knowles (1990, p.54) based his adult learning theory on the view that "adults learn best in informal, comfortable, flexible, nonthreatening settings". Educators should recognise the control they exert over the learning experience and the control the student has to direct their own learning (Pilling-Cormick 1997). Walton suggests that this was achieved in his study by "down playing" teacher authority by incorporating "reciprocal teaching methods, inclusive decision making opportunities and a physical restructuring of the classroom" (Walton 2010, p.16).

Creating a catalyst for transformative learning

As with Rogers (1983), Knowles (1984, 1990) and Freire (1993, 2000, 2004, 2005), Mezirow (1997) encourages the use of education that fosters critically reflective thought such as imaginative problem posing, group deliberation, action research projects, critical incidents and real life case studies where learning takes place through discovery. Teaching strategies or catalysts for transformation can take many forms in creating a disorientating dilemma. This is a factor which is accepted by proponents of both conscious and subconscious transformative learning processes.

Creating cognitive dissonance or a disorientating dilemma is a useful catalyst in enabling someone to question their views and beliefs. The literature demonstrates that this can be done in many ways such as developing expressive ways of knowing by engaging the learner's imagination and intuition through creative expression and analysis (Davis-Manigaulte et al 2006) through film, documentary, novels, short stories and poems (Cranton 2002); critical group discussions and guided conversations (Walton 2010); autobiography which incorporates core values of subjectivity, experience, voice and reflection (Bernhardt 2009); by hearing first hand experiences and life stories (Rush 2008); problem based learning (Von Kotze and Cooper 2000), professional conversations and accounting for moment-by moment interactions (Phillips et al 2002) and flexible, open ended lesson planning in place of routine structure (Pearson and Somekh 2006).

Rush (2008) for example, who developed a criteria for measuring the occurrence of transformative learning within the adult education classroom as previously discussed, involved service users in teaching sessions to enable mental health nursing students to challenge their preconceptions and beliefs regarding the experience of mental health. She found that hearing the lived experience enabled students to question their own beliefs and pre-conceptions and recognise the stigma regarding mental health. As one student concluded, "they are just like you and me" (Rush 2008, p.534). All students reported an increase in knowledge and for several it had led directly to changes in their practice such as pro-actively promoting mental health recovery based on their transformed view that this could happen. This had not previously been achieved when learning about mental ill health from literature and psychiatric diagnostics or even from their practice experience. This had only involved working with people who were unwell and as such had failed to challenge their belief that someone with a serious mental health problem was unlikely to recover.

Walton (2010) found that engaging in group discussions and guided conversations led to students becoming more aware of the complexities and ambiguities in the topics they were exploring. This led to more critical thought and reflection and an increased openness to the view points of others, which was applied to their views on other areas of modern social life. More critical thought was also the outcome of a pilot study within social work education at an American University for Grise-Owens et al (2010). They incorporated the exploration of a current event (in their case Hurricane Katrina) from

which to explore social justice in all units across the curricula. As a result of relating theory to a current issue and topic which had affected them all, students developed an understanding of power, social constructs and social action. Students reported that this awareness had influenced their practice. As one student commented, 'I am beginning to look at the social and political systems which affect my clients' (Grise-Owns et al 2010, p.141)

In each of these studies, educators created opportunities for learning which were meaningful, real and of interest and importance to the learners. Opportunities for learning built on the principle of adult learning theory as previously explored, that learning must be meaningful, relevant and purposeful to the persons' life. They also built on the notion of integrality between themselves, their learning, their practice and their environment and the benefits of shared learning.

Shared learning

Grise-Owens et al (2010) identify shared learning and the interaction between people as the key to their approach's success in fostering transformative learning. This view garners support elsewhere within the literature (such as Von Kotze and Cooper 2000; Phillips et al 2002; Pearson and Somekh 2006; Taylor 2007; Merriam and Kim 2008; Walton 2010). Shared learning is also intrinsic to many non western perspectives on learning and knowing which view learning as lifelong, informal and as a communal activity where understanding arises through each other (Merriam and Kim 2008). The concept of connectedness is integral to unitary appreciative inquiry and the whole person approaches to education, which underpin this study but also to my own experience of group supervision within a Doctorate in Professional Practice. Shared learning, peer mentoring and the opportunity to explore and reflect on each other's experiences was a useful catalyst for reflection and development for me during the doctoral process.

It is important however not to lose sight of the individual within the learning process or the personalised views of transformation which recognises the value of internalised processes (Scott 1997; Elias 1997), not least because of the influence individuals have on the cognitive processes of the group as a whole (Scott 1997). If we are to accept Jung's (1971) view of individuation as explored earlier in this chapter (cited in Lin and Cranton 2005), then differentiation from the group is also necessary for transformation

to occur. Lee and Greene (2003) add to the debate on individuality by arguing the need for transformative learning opportunities to address student's individual needs. Their model of multi-cultural social work education, mentioned earlier, identifies four potential cultural stances (ethnocentric, information, curiosity and reflexivity) from which to identify the student's starting point. Whilst students can learn from others at different levels of awareness and insight to themselves, teaching strategies and activities can also be tailored to their individual needs. They argue that this individual response takes into account the learner's readiness to engage in the learning journey. It fosters critical reflection but at a level accessible for them.

Lee and Greene (2003) encourage educators to use a wide range of teaching strategies and activities to meet these individual needs within a group environment. When considering what models there are for fostering the development of transformative learning which acknowledges the individual or the whole person, emphasis should be placed on incorporating this wide range of strategies to meet the needs of different learners.

Implications for social work education

There is much that we can learn from the literature in relation to transformative learning within social work education. This includes developing a safe and trusting learning environment; enabling individual learners as well as promoting shared learning; and creating a range of opportunities for transformative learning to occur. The principle of learning through discovery from meaningful events is fundamental to Knowles' notion of andragogy (1984, 1990) and Roger's Humanist theory (1983) where learning is understood within the context of the person's life. Educators take on the role of facilitator rather than the expert in all of these approaches (Rogers 1983; Knowles 1984; 1990; Mezirow 2003). TLT acknowledges that not all learning will take place in the classroom or the university setting although this is where the catalyst may have been set. Critical reflection may take place after the fact for example driving home, cooking supper, going for a walk or telling someone about their day (Cranton 2002). It may be a conscious process or a process of discernment or mindless assimilation.

The literature in relation to transformative learning demonstrates that learning is about more than developing the mind. Merriam and Kim (2008, p.76) suggest it is about developing as a "moral person, a good person, a spiritual person, who by being part of

the community uplifts the whole". TLT recognises the connectedness between a person and their environment and the influence this will have on their learning. It promotes shared learning and making sense of issues and topics by relating them to real, meaningful events. As such, it provides an approach to learning which acknowledges the whole person.

Tensions identified from reviewing the literature

A dilemma that emerges from the literature in relation to this study and my own professional practice as an educator, is the tension between the principles of transformative learning and adult learning theory which are based on self directed learning, independence, personal development, autonomous thought, transformations and goals which should not be governed by outside curricula or an organisation's values. Despite evidence in the literature and in my own practice of a shift from a competence based model to a reflective paradigm in social work education (as explored in chapter one on the social work education context), social work educators are required to assesses students against a specific set of National Occupational Standards; within the validated curriculum and within a specific timeframe. It is somewhat incongruent to impose a set of standards on social work students which may not align with their own objectives; priorities and values. The new proposed Professional Capabilities Framework as explored in chapter one, goes some way to addressing this. It recognises the lifelong nature of social work education and the requirement for personal and professional support and development.

To some degree these tensions are acknowledged within Friere's (1993, 2000, 2004, 2005) work which is characterised by the oppressive and liberating potential of education and learning. He focuses on the false sense of identity which emerges when imposed reality is incongruent with a person's own heritage (Jarvis 1983 p91). Merely changing our persona fails to challenge "uncritically absorbed assumptions and beliefs" (Lin and Cranton 2005). This resonates with the social work literature previously mentioned which identifies a dissonance between students' professional social work values and the imposed restrictions and limitations they find in practice (Wilson et al 2007; Leung 2007; Morley 2008; Mackay and Woodward 2010). This often leads to the submissive stance or reluctant conformity explored in chapter one. Autonomous thinkers are able to recognise, explore and make judgments about these conflicts; enabling them to challenge oppressive systems and seek change.

The competence, technical-rational (Wilson et al 2007; Leung 2007; Morley 2008; Mackay and Woodward 2010), administrative (Lymbery 2005) and instrumental learning (Mezirow 1990, 2003) models however still prevail within social work education. Mezirow (1997) recognises the need for job related competencies but describes these as short term objectives rather than the longer term goal which is to become a "socially responsible autonomous thinker" (1997, p.8). In relation to adult education, Pilling-Cormick (1997) gives the example of a computer student needing guidance to learn basic computing skills before they are likely to take control over their learning. This reinforces the need for education to identify the learner's starting point and recognise their need for both instrumental and communicable learning as defined by Mezirow (1990, 2003).

Mezirow (1997) argues that an effective adult educator will recognise both goals, implying that the two are not mutually exclusive. Social work education and practice as guided by government policy has received significant criticism recently, most notably in Munro's independent review of child protection (2011) for focussing on following rules at the expense of enabling practitioners to exercise professional expertise and judgment. Munro (2011) argues that this has led to poorer outcomes for children. This suggests that imposed short term objectives have taken priority over the longer term goal of becoming a socially responsible autonomous thinker. Munro (2011) argues that this balance needs to be restored. Creating learning opportunities which foster transformative learning could achieve both outcomes and restore this balance.

Discussion into whether these tensions were apparent for the students in this study and whether this impacted on them will be explored in part two.

Gaps identified in the literature.

There is still much to know about transformative learning in relation to the impact this has on the students' lives. Taylor (2008) identifies gaps in how the student themselves foster transformative learning and the impact that this learning then has on the individual's peers and those involved in the student's life. Interestingly he does not comment on the impact on the person themselves. Impact however is largely absent from the literature. Whilst some thought is given to the impact on the person within the classroom setting and the need to create a safe environment for discussion and risk

taking, there is little acknowledgment of the impact that transformative learning has on the student's sense of self or well-being or their views or relationship with the world around them. Expressed implicitly throughout the literature is the view that because transformative learning leads to more open, insightful, permeable and inclusive views of the world, this can only have a positive outcome. This too is an area in need of more research and which will be addressed directly by this research study.

This research study

Gaps identified within this literature review are explored within the research component of this thesis due to the emphasis that unitary appreciative inquiry places on context, relationships and types of knowing. The first aim of the study is to illuminate the unique experiences of student social workers in relation to the impact social work education has had on their whole selves, their beliefs, values and behaviour. Because participants are enabled to share and critically reflect on whether, what and how changes to their whole selves occurred, a more individual, culturally sensitive perspective which incorporates aspects of each person's wholeness such as mental, physical and emotional parts of the whole, is achieved. Informed by the discussion on the need for critical analysis and reflection, the research study will use a range of strategies and techniques to facilitate this reflection. It also draws on other types of knowing to enable the participants to express and analyse their experiences in different ways.

Illuminating the student's experiences and perspectives within this study enables me to identify whether transformative learning has occurred for them. I look at whether it has occurred; how it has occurred; and evaluate the effectiveness of the programme and my practice in enabling it. My aim is to generate ways of improving this process. In the way that many of the studies identify effective catalysts for achieving transformation, my contact with the participants in this research and the illuminations and representations created, enabled my own transformative learning and perspective transformation. As such it informed the practice development component of this Doctorate.

Part two: research

Part two focuses on the research component of this Doctorate in Professional Practice and the use of a unitary appreciative inquiry (UAI) as developed by W. Richard Cowling. As with previous chapters, personal narrative and reflective elements run throughout. Research processes are explored from identifying an area of inquiry and an appropriate method through to the research inquiry itself and the presentation and discussion of the findings. Justification for the research study is explored along with the originality and the contribution to new knowledge. Discussion, analysis and critique of the research are provided in relation to the relevant literature within this context.

Discussion, reflection and analysis within part two draw on the work of Cowling (2001, 2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2010) and other UAI researchers (Talley 2004; Cox 2004; Talley et al 2005; Alligood 2008; Rushing 2008 and Repede 2009). Heron's cooperative inquiry (1994) and the conceptual framework of Martha Rogers' Science of Human Beings (1990) are identified as the key underpinning theoretical frameworks. Links are made between these and the educational approaches and models of transformative learning previously identified. As an emergent approach, the definition and methods of UAI continue to evolve. Cowling and Repede (2010, p.64) acknowledge that "certain aspects of UAI have been left wanting in explicitness" and that refinements have occurred as the different researchers have attempted to address challenges. The aim of part two is to provide my interpretation of UAI and to demonstrate its potential as both a research technique and an educative tool to foster transformative learning.

I do this first by exploring the process of choosing UAI as the approach for this study (chapter four); I then provide: an overview and critique of the method itself (chapter five); how the method was used within this study (chapter six); discussion and reflection on the ethical considerations (chapter seven); the presentation of findings in the form of a unitary appreciative profile (chapter eight); consideration of the trustworthiness and quality of the findings (chapter nine) and discussion, analysis and reflection on my interpretation of these findings (chapter ten).

Chapter 4: Choosing a method

Chapter four provides discussion and reflection on my choice of method for this research inquiry. Directed by the desire to identify an approach which was congruent with my professional social work values and the underpinning educational theory, I considered a number of different options. These and the reasons for choosing unitary appreciative inquiry (UAI) are explored along with my reflections on how this process enabled me to focus the direction of the research inquiry. The method itself is explored in more detail within chapter five.

Starting point

At the start of the doctoral process, my knowledge of research methods was limited and I identified this as an area to develop. I wanted to identify a research method for use within this study but also to develop a general awareness and understanding of a range of approaches. From the start, I had a clear sense of wanting to identify unique experiences and gain insights into the lives of the student participants. Whilst I anticipated identifying themes and drawing conclusions from these, I did not want to discount any individual or unique viewpoints or experiences. I wanted to adopt what Kvale (1996) identifies as a traveller approach to research where I could listen to students' stories and uncover their experiences, views and perspectives. In addition to discovering new knowledge, a potential outcome is that "the traveller may change as well" (Kvale 1996, p.4). As identified within the introduction to this thesis, this was a personal objective of undertaking a Doctorate in Professional Practice as I sought to learn about myself and enhance my own practice as an educator. It was for this reason that I focussed primarily on qualitative research but with an open mind for using quantitative or mixed methods. Uncovering unique stories could provide significant learning and opportunities for reflection for me as a practitioner and educator and wider afield in social work, social care and health education.

In search of a method

In the search for a method, I attended qualitative research sessions and workshops and read literature on qualitative approaches and techniques. These included grounded theory, phenomenology, autoethnography, appreciative inquiry, action research, focus group and case study approaches. My aim was to identify the best methods for achieving insight into the lives of those involved in the study. In many ways any of

these would have been appropriate approaches to use as they would have succeeded in illuminating individual stories. Phenomenology was of interest because of this focus on individual experience. It:

> studies the subjects' perspectives on their world; attempts to describe in detail the content and structure of the subjects' consciousness, to grasp the qualitative diversity of their experiences and to explicate their essential meanings (Kvale 1996, p.53).

I was also drawn however to the more participatory approaches. Most qualitative approaches 'share a broad philosophy such as person centredness and a certain open-ended starting point' (Holloway and Todres 2003, p.345). Some of the participatory approaches however (cooperative inquiry and action research for example), seemed more congruent with the topic itself and with my own professional and personal values than others.

Exploring different methods enabled me to recognise the importance for me of working together with participants and ensuring that the research process was of direct benefit to them. Partnership working is intrinsic to social work practice. Professional social work values, as previously identified, include respect for people as individuals; valuing and recognising people's expertise and experience and challenging injustice and inequality (TOPSS UK 2002). These are seen as requirements for challenging structural, cultural and personal oppression and in achieving success and better outcomes for people who come into contact with social work services. Values are also fundamental to the educational approaches such as TLT explored in part one. Control over the learning process is shared and the role of self is recognised. Participatory models seemed the natural approach to adopt with students engaged in the research due to this congruence.

Participatory and action research

Participatory and action research approaches, it seemed, would best reduce the potential for oppression between me as the researcher and the participants. Potential for gaining insights which most closely reflected the participants' actual experiences would be increased as was the potential for the participants to seek change, including social change. I felt that this could enhance their own learning and development as a result of insights gained during the process. Principles of action research include the capacity

building process, attentive communication, inclusion, participation and relationships based on equality and acceptance (Stringer 2007). All of these are congruent with a social work value base. My concern about choosing action research however was its description as "a systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they confront in their everyday lives" (Stringer 2007, p.1). My intention was to illuminate stories and experiences for use as a catalyst for critical reflection, rather than to problem solve.

Whilst discounting action research, I had established that the research should be undertaken with the students, as opposed to doing research on them (Reason 1994) in a way that Kvale describes as "wandering together with" (1996, p.4). In addition to me gaining insight, new knowledge and the opportunity to question my own values and perceptions, their participation could provide a useful opportunity for their own ongoing learning, development and growth. Working in partnership follows the principles of the adult learning theories explored in the previous chapters such as Freire (1993, 2000, 2004, 2005), Knowles (1984, 1990), Rogers (1983) and Mezirow (1990, 1996, 1997, 2000, 2003). This meant ensuring that the process was meaningful, purposeful and relevant to their experience. I wanted to provide students with the opportunity to analyse their own experiences on the degree programme and for both of us to learn from this. It confirmed my aim to identify an approach which was effective for both research inquiry and education.

Nature of the inquiry

Another benefit of considering a range of methods at this stage was the requirement for me to be more specific about what it was I wanted to research and explore. At this point I had considered a range of topics such as personal qualities of the social worker; developing professional values; the emergence of self awareness and the process of achieving critical pedagogy. I did not feel that I had fully identified the area I wanted to focus on or what I wanted to achieve.

At the initial review stage (June 2009) I had narrowed this down to: 'self awareness and the emergence of this on a social work degree programme'. Exploring how different research methods could enable me to understand the emergence of self-awareness or at least illuminate this experience for students, led me to question whether self awareness should be the main focus. I considered broader themes such as a student's ability to be

critically reflective, analytical, insightful, self-aware, empathic, emotionally intelligent and dynamic. I focussed on what it meant to be a 'good social worker'. This was very broad and I found it difficult to capture what it was. Requirements evidenced by any literature relating to social work practice including the statement of expectations from people who use services and care for those who use services (Skills for Care 2002) are diverse. They include knowledge of legislation, policies, approaches, interventions, services (Watson et al 2002; Adams et al 2002; Healey 2005) , skills such as assessment skills, communication skills and group work (Trevithick 2005; Koprowska 2005; Seden 2005; Preston-Shoot 2007; Parker and Bradley 2007); values and personal characteristics (Abbott 1999; Cann 2004; Louvet 2007) and the ability to reflect on social work practice (Moon 1999; Fook 2002; Gould and Baldwin 2004; White et al 2006; Knott and Scragg 2007; Rutter and Brown 2011). Any attempt to summarise these or to focus on only one aspect failed to capture the essence of what I wanted to research. The only simple definition I had been able to offer was an intuitive sense of a good social worker having 'it' whatever 'it' may be. This, and the sense that I wanted to focus more on the person than a defined entity such as self awareness, led me to the conclusion that a more effective approach would be to start with the students, as opposed to starting with an outcome and asking how it emerged.

Focus on the whole person

Much of my exploration so far had been informed by my interest in the whole person and their experience of social work education within the wider context of their lives. An interest in people had led me to a career in social work and maintained my person centred approach to both social work practice and education. I recognised that it was this insight which acknowledged the whole person that I wished to gain in order to develop my own practice as an educator. Part one of this thesis however identified gaps in the literature regarding the impact of social work education on a person's life.

This led me to consider exploring with students their transformation and growth during the social work course and the impact of social work education on their sense of self and their wholeness. Rather than focussing on specific changes or outcomes such as the emergence of self-awareness, I adopted a more open-ended exploration of their personal growth, whatever that may be and however it may have emerged. Focus was on the individual and their personal journey, process of discovery, enlightenment,

emancipation, personal and professional development and the notion of 'becoming' a social worker without the constraints of a specific outcome.

So as not to assume that personal growth or transformation had occurred, I decided to explore more openly the impact of social work education on the person. More specifically given my areas of interest, on what the impact of social work education's focus on beliefs, values and behaviour has on the whole person outside of the learning environment. This prevented the assumption of any specific impact or outcome such as personal growth and enabled me to increase my understanding of the learning experience so as to develop educational approaches which acknowledged this.

Choosing unitary appreciative inquiry (UAI)

When discussing the potential benefits of participatory action research within supervision, I was introduced to the option of using UAI. I explored this further by reading key papers using this approach and through attendance at a two day workshop facilitated by its author, W. Richard Cowling. Whilst I had some initial reservations (which are discussed in chapter five), there appeared to be many benefits. Whilst embedded in participatory action research and cooperative inquiry (Reason 1994) the approach also incorporates concepts such as wholeness and appreciation of life patterns. Participants share their story and the researcher or the participants themselves, create representations of their experience. UAI presented an opportunity for me to enable students to recognise, explore and represent their experiences in a way that could be beneficial to their own learning and development and from which others could learn. Encapsulated in the method were both the research and educative outcomes I was looking for.

Use of different media to create representations appealed to me because of the choice it provided to participants. A closer representation of the person could be achieved than if restricted to written expression and interpretation of their experiences. Whilst I had some reservations as to the use of creative arts (as I don't consider myself to be artistic), I felt the potential outweighed any anxieties. Challenging myself to work in a new way could also lead to my own personal growth which is a key benefit and motivator for students undertaking Professional Doctorates (Leonard et al 2005) in particular a Doctorate in Professional Practice (Doncaster and Thorne 2000; Bourner et al 2001; Lester 2004; Stephenson et al 2006; Wellington and Sikes 2006).

The emphasis of UAI on life patterns and the need to represent the person's wholeness was congruent with my own beliefs. I had positive experiences of working as a social worker within a mental health organisation which offered holistic support to individuals experiencing emotional distress. Viewing and working alongside people holistically involved recognising that they had aspects of themselves which could not be fully understood in abstract parts such as physical, spiritual, mental and emotional parts of a greater whole. Seeing people within the context of their lives led to far better insights into their experiences and more effective responses to their distress. The best analogy I had at the time for understanding a person's wholeness recognised that aspects of a person were not just inter-related parts but aspects of the same entity. Just as water can take the form of liquid, ice and steam, a person can take the form of mind, body and spirit. My interpretation of UAI was that it would aim to capture this wholeness in relation to a particular experience (Cowling 2004b, 2005). It had the potential to capture the wholeness or the experience of social work education for each of the participants involved, creating a richness and depth which may not have been achieved in the other approaches I had considered.

Congruence with the other areas of this study

Both the method and the focus of the study appeared to be congruent with the needs of the students, my objectives as a researcher, the social work programme for which I am a lecturer and the requirements of the Doctorate in Professional Practice. As a result, most of the elements seemed to slot into place. Instead of taking a 'best fit' approach to choosing a method, UAI generated a range of options and opportunities. Holloway and Todres (2003, p.347) discourage researchers from using "method for methods sake" and quote Janesick (2000) who labelled this as methodolatry where researchers are more obsessed with method than content. They argue that coherence is achieved when the distinctive features of an approach are consistent with the nature of the inquiry, the style and type of data collection and the analysis and presentation of the findings. UAI recognises the need to see individuals as whole not just as aspects of themselves such as being a student. Individual experiences are presented without diluting these to create a single theory or proposition. Both the process of data collection and the presentation of findings present opportunities of fostering critical reflection, discernment and transformative learning and can serve as emancipatory and educative tools for those involved. How this can be achieved is discussed in the following chapters.

Chapter 5: Unitary appreciative inquiry (UAI)

Chapter five provides an overview of UAI. Key principles of the method are identified along with some of the underpinning concepts and models. UAI is a relatively new approach still being developed by W. Richard Cowling for use primarily within mental health nursing research and practice. The use of UAI so far has been limited to studies and papers by its author (2001, 2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2010), and a small number of research inquiries, most of which are part of health related doctoral studies (Talley 2004; Cox 2004; Talley et al 2005; Alligood 2008; Rushing 2008; Repede 2009). It was developed as an approach which recognises "human wholeness and uniqueness" (Cowling 2004a, p.202). Cowling argues that this is often neglected when "human phenomena are 'clinicalized' with an over-emphasis on diagnostic representations" (Cowling 2001, p.32).

UAI is grounded in Martha Rogers' Science of Unitary Human Beings (Cowling 2001; Cowling and Repede 2010); a conceptual system for nursing which recognises the integrality of humans and their environment. Rather than inter-related parts, the Science of Unitary Human Beings suggests that humans and their environment are elements of the same phenomena and as such cannot be fully understood in isolation (Rogers 1990). The main principle from Rogers' work which underpins UAI is the belief in the "irreducible, indivisible nature of human beings" (Rogers1990, p.109; Cowling 2001). This concept, which resonates with the whole person approaches to education and the need to view a person within the context of their environment, is explored in chapter two.

Pattern

Rogers emphasised the importance of a person's energy field which is in constant exchange with that of their environment, coining the term pattern for the identity of that energy field (1990, p.110). Alligood (2008) describes the pattern profile used within UAI as an illustration of the co-participants life pattern which conveys the essence of the person or group. Rogers' belief was that understanding a person's pattern was the key to understanding and appreciating their wholeness. Patterning is also used by Heron (1994) in his account of cooperative inquiry to describe significant patterns in our realities which can be expressed through a range of media including art, music and dance, to develop representational belief or knowledge. Heron (1996) describes this

type of knowledge as “an intuitive grasp of the significance of imaginal patterns” (p33) or “imaginal symbols” (p37). It builds on the concepts of intuition and discernment explored previously in relation to fostering transformative learning. A grasp of such patterns can be used to seek an understanding of “uniqueness within cases and commonality across cases” (Cowling 2001, p.45). Whilst Heron suggests a model of cooperative inquiry to gain this knowledge (or if not knowledge, then belief), Cowling suggests UAI.

By understanding and appreciating life patterns, wholeness and uniqueness, practitioners can seek to improve “the lives of individuals, families, groups and communities” (Cowling 2005, p.94). Whilst it seeks patterns which reflect the wholeness, essence and uniqueness of a particular individual or group, reflection on these representations and patterns “can provide a way of understanding human life, conditions and situations” (Cowling 2001, p.35). As such, it can be used to inform our understanding of the particular context not just for the particular person. As Rushing (2008), suggests reality can be perceived from a wider perspective when aspects of a person’s experience are explored that others may have considered disparate, dissimilar or unrelated.

Appreciative knowing

The appreciative approach within UAI, involves replacing the notion of problem (typical in action research, participatory research and cooperative inquiry) with that of mystery, “something to get caught up in” (Cowling 2005, p.96); “a miracle that can never be fully comprehended” (Cooperrider and Srivastva 1987, p.2). Appreciative inquiries focus on what works rather than to problem solve. An understanding of a person’s pattern in the way described above is dependent on what the participants themselves identify as important and of value (Alligood 2008). This further places the participants in a position of power as the approach aims to affirm and appreciate their experiences rather than criticise or show scepticism and to enable them to develop their own propositional and practical knowledge as a result. As such, it is congruent with the underpinning educational theory previously outlined and the professional social work values which see the person as the expert in their own experience (Skills for Care 2002). It does however raise questions regarding the trustworthiness of the findings which are explored in chapters nine (quality and trustworthiness of the findings) and chapter ten (my interpretation of the findings).

Participatory knowing

UAI methodology also builds on frameworks used in participatory action research, in particular cooperative inquiry which was proposed by Heron in 1971 and subsequently developed by Heron and Reason (Heron 1996). It is based on the belief that self directed learning, autonomy, cooperation and reciprocal relations are fundamental in undertaking any research into the human condition which aims to result in personal and social transformation (Heron 1996). These too are the key principles of the adult education theory which underpin this study (Rogers 1983; Knowles 1990; Freire 2000, 2004, 2005 and in particular, Mezirow 1996, 1997, 2003).

Transformative

According to Cowling (2005), UAI can be used as a way of gaining insights into a person's life and experience within a particular context. As such, I considered it to be an appropriate choice of method for gaining insight into the experience of learning on a social work degree and for seeking to understand the impact on the person as a whole. Rogers (1990) argued that such insight can lead to increased self awareness for both practitioners and patients. The process is a form of "knowing participation in change" (Cowling and Repede 2010, p.73) with the goal of transformation and emancipation for those involved. Learning can be transformative for the person but can also change "our understanding of the world and the world itself" (Cowling 2004a, p.207). An aim of this study was to lead to increased self awareness and transformative learning for me (as explored in chapter twelve when reflecting on my own personal growth); and the student participants (as we engaged in the expression and synthesis of their experience as explored in chapters six, seven, eight, nine and ten); In addition to the process itself, the findings are used as a catalyst or as a disorientating dilemma (Mezirow 1996, 1997, 2003) for critical reflection and subsequent action by the participants and by others. Transformation and emancipation, therefore, can occur for other students, educators and practitioners (as explored in chapters nine, ten and eleven).

Praxis

The potential for transformation and emancipation leads Cowling (2004a) to describe UAI as both a research tool and an intervention within contexts such as mental health nursing. He describes the integration of theory and practice in UAI, where knowledge and action are being informed simultaneously, as praxis. Participants can seek to

understand their own life patterns, wholeness and uniqueness and seek to improve their own lives in addition to the researcher gaining insight.

It was the intention of this study to utilise this duality by developing UAI as a research tool that also has an educative quality for the student participants. The aim was to enable the participants to seek an understanding of their own life patterns by exploring their experience of qualifying social work education. If effective, methods could be developed and applied to other areas of educational practice as is explored in the practice development component of this Doctorate in Professional Practice (Part 3).

Synopsis

UAI seeks a synoptic perspective when viewing data generated within a research project. A range of data is gathered which instead of analysing as separate parts, is distilled to create a unitary appreciative profile and viewed as a whole. A unitary perspective views this synthesis as unique expressions of human wholeness. This is distinct from a systems perspective which focuses on different parts to make sense of the whole (Cowling and Repede 2010).

Unitary appreciative profile

Cowling (2001) uses four types of knowing to develop a unitary appreciative profile of a person within a particular context. This synopsis of the findings is used to see if a pattern emerges which "reflects the wholeness, uniqueness and essence of human life" (p36). It seeks to convey the essence of a person or group (Alligood 2008), as explained within the pattern section of this chapter. The aim of the profile is for its use by practitioners (in this case, educators) to develop their own practice and by participants to "know their life pattern and to use these skills to transform their lives in meaningful ways" (Cowling 2004a, p.212). Whilst much of Cowling's work has been to explore the experience of despair, other researchers have used UAI to explore experiences and life patterns within the context of teenage pregnancy and motherhood (Talley 2004); professional caregiver despair (Cox 2004); undertaking a drug and alcohol 12 step programme (Rushing 2008); experiencing spinal cord injury (Alligood 2008); and participatory dreaming (Repede 2009).

One study developed a unitary appreciative profile of a town rather than of a person or group. The profile aimed to capture the essence and spirit of the community; "a living

portrait" which moved beyond that of facts and figures (Talley et al 2005, p.27). For me, this effectively summarises the aim of UAI. Talley et al (2005) achieved this by physically exploring the town and in addition to noting the physical environment also considered the spirit, flow, experiences, expectations, attitudes, values, aesthetics, rhythms – movement, sense of time, hopes and fears and relationships of the town and its people. This was distilled to create a "snapshot" (Talley et al 2005, p.27). When presenting this to others, sights, sounds, tastes, song and story were used rather than facts and figures to convey a snapshot that represented the wholeness of the town.

The distinctive feature of all of the profiles created within different research inquiries is the use of creative expression to capture and represent wholeness. Capturing the essence moves beyond facts and figures and what is immediately apparent. The process of creating a unitary appreciative profile is as important as the outcome for seeking insight and transformation. It seeks to surface themes, links and patterns and to create a representation of something that is recognised as in constant flux and change.

Four types of knowing and developing a unitary appreciative profile

In addition to these principles, Cowling (2004a) adopts the distinction Heron (1996) makes between four different forms of knowledge that research can generate. These are experiential, presentational, propositional and practical. Several of the UAIs previously mentioned have maintained this distinction. More recently however, Cowling has challenged researchers to refrain from the categorisation of representations but to seek ways of conveying the interrelatedness of the forms of knowing in the presentation of findings (Cowling and Repede 2010). The following presents the four types of knowing and suggests how in this study, more holistic, interconnected, synoptic representations can be achieved.

Experiential knowledge

The first of Heron's (1996) four types of knowing is experiential knowledge which is gained through direct contact with the person involved and requires empathy and resonance to develop a perception of the person's experience (Cowling 2004a). Heron (1996, p.52) suggests that developing experiential knowledge involves the researcher "imaging and feeling the presence of some energy, entity, person, place, process or thing". Cowling (2004a) suggests that this may take the form of conversations, discussions, interviews, focus groups and observations. Talley (2004) achieves this

through ongoing dialogue over a six week period whereas Rushing (2008) and Alligood (2008) interview individual participants. The process is not restricted to dialogical engagement but can include any process which enables the researcher to generate experiential knowledge.

Presentational knowledge

Presentational knowledge can emerge from experiential knowledge through the development of representations of the person to express the meaning and significance of the experience (Heron 1996). Heron suggests that representational knowledge can be used for both expression and explanation. In both cooperative inquiry and UAI, these representations can be through imagery, music, storytelling, poetry or any other media or metaphor. Cowling (2004b, 2005) adopts this in different studies both by developing pattern profiles himself as an interpretation of the person's experience and by enabling the person or group to do these themselves as an expression of their experience. Rushing (2008) uses different styles of poetic writing to present the experiences of serenity in recovery from alcohol and drug addiction whereas Alligood (2008) creates individual biographical stories to represent individual experience of spinal cord injury and a fictional narrative story to represent the pattern profile.

Such expressions can stand alone as the creation of presentational knowledge, a type of knowing in its own right, without the need for interpretation, analysis or words. It can be achieved through a process of discernment as discussed in the chapter on transformative learning theory where the person can engage with a series of images without the use of conscious critical evaluation (Elias 1997; Scott 1997). Heron (1996) suggests that the observer can develop an intuitive grasp of their significance. Cowling (2005) describes this as appreciation. It embraces a type of knowing which is distinct from critical knowing in that it is based on affirmation, trust, belief and conviction (Cowling 2001).

Propositional knowledge

Propositional knowledge is the expression of statements which draw on ideas and theories generated from the knowledge gained so far (Heron 1996). Whilst a unitary appreciative profile in UAI may incorporate specific or unique representations of each person or group; themes, theories and reflections can be generated by the participants which may have meaning for others and may in turn, generate further reflections and

insights. Heron (1996) for example, adapts his pyramid model of the four types of knowing grounded in experiential knowing and moving up through presentational, propositional and then practical knowing to one of a circuit model where deeper and richer types of knowledge emerge as one continues to inform another. This resonates with Cowling and Repede's (2010) call for a more synoptic representation of the different forms of knowing to represent wholeness.

Practical knowledge

Practical knowledge in many ways is the type of knowing which defines action research and UAI as it identifies the practice, skills and competence required to act on the other forms of knowledge. It is the 'action' of the research that enables participants to actualise change. This focus on action makes it particularly congruent with this Doctorate in Professional Practice where changes to practice are an intended outcome of the research process. Cowling (2001) argues that such action emerges from the unitary appreciative process in the way it seeks to understand (a particular condition or phenomena); the use of unitary consciousness and "the development of one's self as an instrument of appreciation" (p36-7). As UAI is used in this study to seek both research and educative outcomes, the potential outcome is that the participants, including myself, can act on their learning and the insight gained. Knowledge generated within the study can enhance both the participants' and my professional practice and personal development.

Discussion

On first reading Cowling's work I was ambivalent as to the ability of UAI to produce information rich data which closely represented the experiences of those involved. This was influenced by the complexity of the approach and its many influences. I was unsure of the ability of the methods to gain insight into the experience of the person involved or to achieve its goals such as one which aimed "to get the deepest possible understanding of (an experience) and its relationship to the person's life" (Cowling 2004b, p.289). In one research study into the experience of despair, for example, Cowling (2004b) uses a case study approach to conceptualise the experiences of fourteen women who participated in his study (three of which are presented within his 2004b paper). When presenting the data collection back to the women at a second interview, Cowling does this in the form of four documents: a transcript of the first interview; a synopsis (which demonstrates inter-connectedness within the transcript

text); a pattern profile (which included a story using “metaphor and images derived from specific transcript content” (p290); a piece of music chosen by the researcher that addressed the emerging themes; and other reflections, interpretations and representations) and a document which provided a summary of despair from the view of the participant (as recorded by the researcher).

I questioned the lack of participation by the women in creating the pattern profile and the ability and accuracy of the researcher to identify stories, connections or music which represented another person’s experience. This view was reinforced by one of the participants who did not feel that the music reflected her experience of despair. I was influenced by my own values previously identified that a person is their own best expert and best placed to represent their experiences. I felt that choosing a piece of music the researcher would be restricted by their understanding of the person’s experience and by their own knowledge and as such may choose music with only a tenuous link to the emerging themes. I felt that this would reduce the validity of the research data and the accuracy of the profile and demonstrate a lack of understanding to the participant.

What I began to recognise however, was that presenting this data back to the person enabled them to clarify and further express their experience, either by explaining why they agreed with the profile or in expressing why they did not. Interpretation of the profile created a “disorientating dilemma” (Mezirow 2003, p.4) from which to further reflect. It enabled the ongoing process of reflection and the opportunity for richer information to be gained which could lead to a closer representation of the person’s experience. Validity was sought by retaining the person’s words and voice throughout; by generating a range of documents to represent the person’s experience and by the use of participant validation.

This is confirmed by other unitary appreciative inquiries. Alligood (2008) and Rushing (2008) worked in collaboration with participants to generate knowledge, and then they themselves constructed individual and group profiles which were then presented back to the participants. This process follows repeated exposure and deep immersion in the data by the researcher. Data, which may include interviews, transcripts, field notes, method notes and reflective journal entries (Alligood 2008) are analysed and processed to create a synopsis which seeks to represent the knowledge gained. In both cases the researchers reported participants feeling that the profiles represented their experiences and the life

pattern of the focus of the inquiry on alcohol 12 step recovery (Rushing 2009) and spinal cord injury (Alligood 2008).

In other studies by Cowling, he enables the participants to develop their own profiles either to express and represent their own experience within a particular context or as a group representation of a shared experience. He identifies this as the "ideal profile" (2001, p.39). This combination of method and increased participation and control by those involved in the study, convinced me of the potential of the method to effectively represent the experiences of the participants in a way that was also congruent with my values and approach to teaching and learning.

I acknowledged that many of the principles of cooperative inquiry, on which UAI is based, would also have met the needs of this research study. UAI however, enables the process of illuminating a person's wholeness and uniqueness. Its potential for this study was that it would recognise that a person's identity goes beyond that of student and would recognise the person within the context of their lives both inside and outside of the formal learning environment.

In my view, UAI takes the positive aspects of cooperative inquiry, adding to it a holistic perspective which recognises and values the multiple, inter-connected aspects of a person and combines it with the mindset of appreciative inquiry which aims to focus on what works and why (Cooperrider and Srivastva 1987). The process provides the opportunity for researcher and participants to appreciate each person's perspective and to learn from it.

Using an emergent approach

There are inherent risks in using an emergent approach in terms of validity and credibility and these are identified and explored in the following chapters on method and the discussion of the findings. Widespread peer review or testing in different contexts such as the field of pedagogical research is lacking. It could also be argued that the underpinning concepts drawn from Cowling's beliefs around human existence and the presence of energy fields and life patterns based on the Martha Rogers' Science of Unitary Human Beings are unconventional and as such may lack credibility. They draw on a vast array of established theories however from disciplines such as astronomy, mathematics, physics and philosophy (Biley 1996). Although not traditionally used

within nursing, social work or education, they can be used to understand human beings and how we experience the world around us. Whilst it may not be possible to prove or observe the presence of the energy fields and life patterns, the Science of Unitary Human Beings (Rogers 1990) provides a conceptual framework or system from which to explore the world and particular human experiences or in the case of UAI, to explore human wholeness and uniqueness.

Outcomes generated from using such a conceptual system, give rise to insights and understandings which are in depth, rich and detailed representations of a person's experience within a particular context. Person centred, creative, holistic, participatory and appreciative approaches are provided which are congruent with my own personal values and beliefs; the professional values which underpin the National Occupational Standards for Social Work (TOPSS 2002); underpinning educational theory; and the aims for this study. These include beliefs that people are unique; can only be understood within the context of their environment; have the capacity to knowingly participate in change and have multiple aspects to themselves which characterise their wholeness. All of these can be explored using UAI whilst using the better established and peer reviewed framework of cooperative inquiry (Heron 1996) to underpin it. Choosing this approach adds to the body of work relating to UAI and contributes to the testing and review of what and how the approach can be used, for example, as an educative tool for fostering transformative learning. The methods of achieving this within this study are outlined in the following chapter.

Chapter 6: Method

The aim of this chapter is to outline the research design. I explore the use of UAI within this study and the methods used to gather the range of data required to create a unitary appreciative profile. Reflections are provided on the process of designing the research and the effectiveness of different tools in achieving the required outcomes. Ethical considerations are identified but explored more fully in chapter seven. Implications of design decisions on the outcome for the research findings are explored later in chapters nine and ten when discussing the findings.

Method

A number of tools were used within this UAI to gain as close a picture as possible of the participants' experience (Cowling 2004b; Talley 2004; Talley et al 2005; Alligood 2008; Rushing 2008). Experiential, presentational, propositional and practical knowledge (Heron 1996) was generated through verbal, written and visual expressions and interpretations of the participants' own experiences and life patterns. This was achieved through verbal discussions, one to one contact, a group workshop and e-mail exchanges. All were used to compile a unitary appreciative profile (Cowling 2004b) to represent the impact of social work education on a person's beliefs, values and behaviour and the impact of these changes on a person's life. The profile was used to inform each participant's own development as well as the development of social work practice and education.

Choosing the participants

As is common in qualitative research (Kuzel 1999), this study focussed on a small purposefully chosen sample. Kvale (1996, p.101) advises interviewers to "interview as many subjects as necessary to find out what you need to know". An aim of this study was to illuminate unique experiences. Insight could have been gained by interviewing one person in depth with validity being achieved through richness and quality of information and insight gained. I chose however to explore a number of unique experiences and to bring together each of the participants to express, analyse and reflect on these experiences during a group workshop which draws on the principles of shared learning. This served to add to the richness of information; the development of experiential, presentational, propositional and practical knowledge and utilised the duality of UAI by being both a research technique and a teaching and learning tool. As

such, it aimed to be of direct benefit to those taking part as well as to the research process.

I chose to seek five to eight participants, including myself, as this was a small enough number to ensure the depth and insight aimed for but was also an optimum group size number. “Fewer than six people may provide an insufficient number for a stimulating dialogue, and more than twelve are too many for all participants to get a chance to express their points of view” (Vaughn et al 1996, p.50). The target number was at the lower end of the optimum size range to enable more depth and analysis at the preceding one to one and personal profile stage.

Sampling

In the first instance my intention was to apply criterion based purposeful sampling (Vaughn et al 1996; Kuzel 1999) by restricting the study to participants currently approaching the end of their undergraduate qualifying social work education within my own programme. Each of the participants had undertaken the same programme; were at the same stage of completion; had participated in similar learning activities (albeit having experienced them differently) and had a similar relationship and familiarity with me. Whilst this raised concerns relating to interpreter bias; power constructs and familiarity with the participants and the context (Scott and Morrison 2005; Coghlan 2006; Mercer 2007; Gunasekara 2007; Darra 2008), it also ensured a similar educational context from which to explore their unique experiences and perceptions. These issues are explored within this and the discussion of findings chapters.

The purposeful group (final year cohort of a qualifying social work programme) of 45 was too large however for this type of inquiry. I considered a number of sampling strategies to decide how best to reduce the number to the required five to eight participants. Sampling types such as the ‘16 kinds of purposeful qualitative sampling’ identified by Patton (1990 cited in Kuzel 1999, p.39) were useful in enabling me to consider what was required to achieve the purpose of the study. From an appreciative perspective, any member of the cohort had the potential to share unique and rich experiences which could be used to develop their own self awareness and learning and to inform the development of professional practice and education. This would have been the case whether selected randomly, opportunistically or by applying other criteria such as typical case, extreme case, critical case or maximum variation (Patton 1990 cited in

Kuzel 1999). I chose therefore to use a process of self selection which seemed congruent with the reciprocal, participatory approach being used and the social work values informing the research inquiry.

Self selection was effective in ensuring that participants did not feel pressured into taking part and a sufficient number did volunteer for the research study to go ahead. Whilst important to the nature of the study, the timing of the research did come at a time when students were under considerable pressure. They were spending 35 hours a week within a placement setting in addition to completing assignments and applying for post qualifying jobs. Some students expressed interest in the study, but chose not to take part for these reasons. Bias may have resulted as the group only included those who were coping well enough with these demands to feel able to commit to the research. In turn, this may have influenced their self perception and beliefs regarding the course and its impact. Participants themselves stated that they felt the research was of value and wanted to contribute for this reason, despite the pressures of placement. As the research sought to illuminate unique experiences from which we could learn and appreciate (Cowling 2001), rather than a representation of all students, I did not view this potential bias as problematic as long as I ensured that it was acknowledged when discussing the findings.

First contact

Volunteers were sought from the cohort of 45 by inviting anyone from the group to express an interest. Invitations were in the form of an e-mail. Incorporated into this process were a number of strategies for minimising the power imbalance due to my role as lecturer and assessor and my familiarity with the group. In addition to consideration within this chapter, these strategies were articulated within the participant information sheet (appendix two) given to all potential volunteers and sent as an attachment with the e-mail. I requested that students read this and considered the reasons for and against taking part before volunteering or expressing an interest.

I explained to the cohort within the participant information form, that if more than eight students offered to take part then diverse sampling would be applied with the aim of obtaining a range of experiences in terms of race, gender, age and background. Whilst the purpose of the inquiry was not to compare and contrast these experiences, adding to the diversity of the group might inform the discussions, reflections and analysis at the

group stage. If fewer than five students had offered to take part, then other sampling methods would have been considered. Options were limited however because of the power constructs and the acknowledgment that potential participants may have felt coerced into taking part. Snowball sampling (Patton 1990 cited in Kuzel 1999) through word of mouth would have seemed a useful next step had numbers been low. Snowball sampling, however, carried risks relating to power constructs if a student had not already volunteered and felt unable to refuse a direct approach. If this had been the case, it would have been preferable for other methods of UAI to be considered such as a smaller case study approach which would be more appropriate to a smaller sample size and could still provide insight.

Following the invitation, I received seven expressions of interest, which I believed to be an optimal number for the research study and UAI approach. I was aware however that whilst I could be flexible with dates and venues to arrange the one to one interview, all of the participants were being asked to participate in a group workshop. As the students were approaching the end of their three year degree and were currently working full time within practice learning settings, arranging a date for all seven to attend proved difficult and so the final five were chosen according to availability. This did result in two of the offers being declined and I gave much thought to whether this was the right decision. I was keen to have all seven involved and did not want to offend anyone that had been interested enough to offer their time. I maintained contact with them to look at ways they could be involved but they were happy to let the research proceed without their involvement.

Individual interviews

Once recruited, participants were invited for a one to one meeting which involved discussion, conversation, reflections and the encouragement of narrative where participants were asked to tell their story. Open questions (Holloway 1997; Holloway and Wheeler 2009) were used to elicit narrative such as “can you tell me about...?” The meetings were based on a semi structured interview approach which as with Kvale’s (1996) explanation, was closer to a conversation than a structured interview but was guided by certain themes. These were:

- Gaining a sense of the person;

- Exploring their perceptions of the impact of social work education on themselves and
- Facilitating their reflection on the implications of this impact.

Themes linked directly to a number of the study's aims and objectives which were identified in the introduction to this thesis such as listening to the student's views and perspectives, illuminating their experience and generating different types of knowing (Heron 1996). The remainder of which were developed collaboratively through the group workshop.

Participants were asked to choose their preferred venue for the interview such as university, placement or other. All chose to meet at the University and I booked small meeting rooms for the interviews rather than my office, to ensure privacy, anonymity, neutrality and to reduce the likelihood of interruptions. Interviews took place over a two week period. At the start of the meeting I reiterated the purpose of the interview and the use of the audio equipment and the participants signed the consent form which they had been sent in advance. I explained the three themes to each participant and explained the holistic and appreciative mindset of UAI. Each interview lasted approximately forty minutes, with around ten minutes spent before and after the audio recorded interview to explain the process and to discuss the arrangements for the group workshop.

Aim of the individual interviews

The aim of the individual interviews was to engage with the person to develop the four ways of knowing: experiential, presentational, propositional and practical (Heron 1996; Cowling 2004a), with emphasis at this point on generating experiential knowledge which as Cowling (2004a) explains is gained through direct contact with the person involved and requires empathy and resonance to develop a perception of the person's experience.

I adopted a naturalist approach to encouraging the participants to tell their story (Elliott 2005) as a way of exploring what their experience was and what meaning it had for them. Questions were used as prompts to help the participants explore and reflect further or to clarify meaning. Sessions were audio recorded to enable further analysis and interpretation and for the creation of a précis of the content for use within the unitary profile to reflect the person's story. I kept reflective and observational notes to

inform both the unitary appreciative profile and subsequent discussions. Whilst profiles are specific to each individual's experiences; reflection and interpretation by others can be used to inform broader theory development (Cowling 2001). These are explored within the discussion of findings and practice development chapters to consider how the findings can inform professional education and practice.

Reflections on the individual interview process

The participants were open and honest and I valued the examples and experiences they shared. At times I wondered if the focus of the discussion had drifted from the proposed theme but quickly realised that in most cases this was due to the significance the person placed on that particular issue or experience. All of the participants shared very personal information about their life experiences and their beliefs and values. Encouraging participants to engage in a narrative about their lives by telling their story can be useful in seeking a close picture of their experience and the significance for them but also in redressing some of the power imbalance (Elliott 2005). The appreciative mindset of UAI allowed me to "get caught up in the mystery" of the person's experience and to appreciate what was meaningful for them (Cowling 2005, p.96). I found that my skills as an interviewer within social work practice and practice education were useful in showing interest; asking appropriate questions and steering the person back to the question if they sought guidance or direction. The participants were skilled in critical reflection gained from their social work education and experience of formal supervision within placement and this helped enormously in them expressing knowledge and insight.

I was mindful of the potential emotional impact on the participants of discussing and sharing such personal information and discussed this with them at the end of the session. All of the participants appeared comfortable with the content of their discussions and aware of ongoing options for support.

Workshop request

At the end of each interview, I gave each participant an information sheet on the workshop (appendix three). Details of the date, time and venue and aims were included along with a brief description of the approach being used and the four types of knowing the workshop was attempting to generate. The information sheet also contained a request which I talked through with each participant **(figure 1).**

Request

Please can you bring with you at least one item that you feel symbolises or represents your learning, development or transition during the past three years. The item or items could be an object, photo, piece of music, or anything that you can share with the group to explain what this process has been like for you. The item itself may hold significance to you or could represent something that has been significant to you. Please feel free to bring more than one item.

Figure 1

The purpose of the request was to introduce the concept of presentational knowing where a person uses or develops representations to express the meaning and significance of an experience (Heron 1996). My aim was to engage the participants' imagination and intuition through creative expression and analysis as a way of fostering critical reflection (Davis-Manigaulte et al 2006). I was mindful that this may have been a new concept to the participants and sought to enable them to retain some control and influence over the research process by allowing them time to consider the request. I hoped it would enable them to prepare for the workshop and continue the process of reflection and analysis triggered by the individual interview. More in depth and considered responses would hopefully emerge than if introducing the concept of presentational knowing on the day of the workshop. My aim was to empower the participants to guide the direction of the research process and the nature of their participation. This is congruent with the values of UAI, social work practice and the educational theory discussed previously.

Aim of the workshop

As with the individual interviews, the workshop was semi-structured and based around key themes, in this case, four types of knowing. The aim was to work through the four types of knowing in order (as suggested by Heron 1996) but for discussion throughout the day to make links between all four so that each one could inform the other.

Reflections on the workshop process

Coming together as a group enabled participants to develop presentational knowledge by creating a metaphor for their experience in a safe and supportive environment. This

is congruent with the principles of fostering transformative learning (Lee and Greene 2003; Cranton 2006; Grise-Owens et al 2010; Walton 2010). Participants contributed to the development of both propositional and practical knowledge using the participatory, self directed and reciprocal principles identified in cooperative inquiry, TLT and UAI.

Forming a group did present the potential for individual expressions to be influenced by those of the group (Scott 1997). This may have prevented the formation of a unique pattern which represented the individual voice. Group dynamics in participatory research, for example, can influence how and what some individuals may contribute with the power of some participants to "suppress certain voices" as might the approach itself if there is a lack of inclusivity or diversity within the group (Fenge 2010, p.12).

Whilst the group of five was formed for the purpose of the research study, they were all known to each other from the cohort of 45. Familiarity will have impacted on the group dynamics. Some of these were to the benefit of the group as they quickly moved to a stage of norming and performing (Tuckman 1965) as they had shared norms and goals and worked well together. I was mindful however that there may have been less constructive dynamics at play. One of the participants had disclosed within the individual interview that she had often felt excluded from the cohort and that whilst some were friendly, others had not been. I was not aware of her relationship to those within the group of five or of whether these comments referred to any of them. To provide her and the other participants with a level of choice, I let each of them know prior to the workshop who would be attending and checked that they were happy to participate.

Working individually or as a group presents benefits and disadvantages. I had anticipated that the participants would be able to draw on their own thoughts and feelings expressed in the individual interviews and would use the influence of the group to enable them to reflect more fully and critically. This certainly appeared to be the case as participants demonstrated warmth and encouragement to each other. The atmosphere throughout the workshop was positive, inclusive and good fun. All of the participants fed back that they had enjoyed the day and found it useful in recognising their progress and achievements but also how they had changed. Value was expressed in sharing these experiences with the others and in finding similarities. There were times when one person's experience would influence the others as they commented on what resonated

for them but they all contributed personal and unique experiences and views. The primary voice in the research data is that of the participants so as not to lose sight of these unique stories within the group representations.

I certainly experienced some reservations before the workshop as I was anxious for it to go well and for the participants to feel that their time was used productively. This was certainly influenced by my role as lecturer as well as a researcher but also as a student leading a research inquiry for the first time. Because of the approach being used, I wanted the group to take the lead and make decisions throughout the day on how to contribute. Whilst this increased the level of participation, it did create some anxiety for me as the day was not fully structured and organised. I was concerned that if the participants did not understand or value what was being requested, they may not fully engage or contribute. I prepared several activities and brought a range of resources for the participants to choose from depending on what direction they wanted the day to take. I had plans in place to offer more guidance and structure if required. **Figure 2** demonstrates the structure in place. Anxieties quickly subsided once the workshop began as the participants were enthusiastic and engaged from the outset.

Semi-structured workshop plan

Welcome and introduction
- Explaining the four types of knowing and the unitary and appreciative mindset

Ground rules
- As suggested and agreed by the participants

Ice-breaker
- Individuals to suggest their own pseudonyms for the research

Experiential knowledge
- Gaining a sense of each person, the group and gaining insight into your experiences: 'what makes you, you?' activity

Presentational knowledge
- Activity 1 – sharing of item(s)
- Activity 2 – creating a group representation

Propositional knowledge
- Drawing conclusions

Practical knowledge
- The implications

Figure 2

Experiential knowing

I developed an activity for generating experiential knowing at the beginning of the session ('what makes you, you?') which served to create cohesion and a shared experience within the group in addition to building on the insight I had gained within the interviews. Individuals expressed and analysed their experience in relation to the impact social work education had on their sense of self, values, beliefs and behaviour. This was achieved through the process of completing the activity itself and from interaction with the other participants who asked questions and commented on the meaning, significance and resonance for them. Creation of individual thought maps demonstrating these links are incorporated into the individual profiles presented within chapter eight (presentation of findings).

The 'what makes you, you' activity was effective in providing insight into each person's identity, particularly in them sharing significant aspects of their sense of self, which the group and I had not known. It was effective in enabling the participants to value all aspects of their selves rather than only sharing their professional or student persona. They were encouraged to share other aspects of their lives from which they could explore the impact of their learning.

As I shared my own thought map first, the activity also enabled me to reduce some of the potential power imbalances by sharing with them aspects of myself which usually remain hidden, such as family and personal interests. I believe this helped with building a rapport and trust and in re-setting the boundaries of our professional relationship to one which was more equitable. This was interesting in terms of the dynamics of the group and my role of researcher. Whilst participating in the 'what makes you, you' activity; this was to redress power issues and to demonstrate what was being asked by providing an example. The group were aware that this would not form part of the research in terms of gaining insight into the impact of social work education. Participatory research including UAI often refers to the researcher as a co-participant but I was mindful that we were exploring their experience and not my own and as such my role and status was different. Cowling acknowledges differences in roles but suggests that each participant including the researcher is seen as "the source of expertise, power and knowledge relevant to their own unique lives" (Cowling 2004a, p.205). My participation in the workshop did inform the research in the later stages when I came to reflect on my own learning and development and the impact of the

experience on me. This acknowledges the different ways that participants can contribute and benefit from the same research processes.

One aspect of the workshop which could have been improved was my explanation of the activity. My wording was not clear and I had to explain it a few times to clarify what was required. On reflection I recognise that the idea was not fully formed in my mind and this had affected my ability to explain it clearly. Whilst this did not hinder the process as it gave the participants more time to think and consider what to share, it could have led to some confusion and anxiety for the participants.

Presentational knowing

The group progressed to consideration of presentational knowing by sharing their 'item' and the meaning and significance the item had for them. Descriptions of each item and photographs have been included in the individual profiles within the presentations of findings chapter. I was pleased with the effectiveness of this activity. All of the participants had interpreted the brief slightly differently which made it unique to them. Whilst each of the participants had applied meaning to their item, several of the participants were able to add meaning as they discussed it. This demonstrated the activity's effectiveness in helping the participants to express their experience but also as a catalyst for further analysis and reflection. This was helped by the interest shown and the questions from the other members of the group.

Following the sharing of individual representations, I encouraged the participants to create a group representation which had meaning and significance for them as a whole whilst recognising each person's uniqueness. Using creative media, the purpose was to represent the impact of qualifying social work education on their lives. My aim was for the process itself to help them to express and analyse this experience and to illuminate this for them and for others. The process could have involved creating a poem, story, painting, drawing, photograph, digital story or any other creation of the participants' choice to represent their experience. I shared these examples with them and provided a range of materials and resources such as paper, pens, paints, a digital camera and computer access for them to choose from.

After some discussion amongst themselves and several suggestions, such as creating a collage of images, they chose to create a digital story and decided that they would all

find their own pictures and images to represent their own unique experiences. Setting themselves time to find the images online, they all returned to the workshop with these saved electronically to share with the group. Critical reflection was guided by the participants including myself and facilitated through discussion, questioning and responses to their representations and emerging patterns. Whilst there was not enough time within the one day workshop to complete the digital story, the group devised a plan of how this could look and sound and asked that I complete this process and share it with them at a later date. Doing this, as opposed to arranging another workshop or meeting, provided the opportunity for ongoing involvement by the participants but at a level they had chosen.

At the time of the workshop, I was ambivalent about the success of the activity. The representations created were very powerful and the participants were pleased with what they had created. Discussions provided a catalyst for further meaning and significance to be recognised and participants felt that the images were true representations of their experience. I was anxious however of the request by the participants for me to complete the digital story. I felt a great sense of responsibility to them to create what they wanted but also concern that this would become my words and my interpretation and not theirs. Whilst I think this was true, I found that by using their images and ideas and their words from the interview, I was able to develop a close picture. The completed work was inevitably my interpretation but I discovered that, as with the studies referred to in chapter five (Cowling 2004b; Alligood 2008; Rushing 2008), this was effective in enabling the participants to reflect further by identifying whether it represented their experience or not.

Presenting an interpretation or representation back to the participants was reinforced as an effective method of fostering further critical reflection and in gaining a closer picture. Interestingly to me, the participants did feel ownership of the completed digital story and their creation of it and were very positive about the outcome and how it captured their experience. The digital story is presented in chapter eight as part of the research findings and ownership is explored further in chapter nine.

Propositional and practical knowing

Following the activity within the workshop to develop the digital story, we discussed what propositional and practical knowing could emerge from the experiential and

presentational knowing generated so far. Participants discussed this openly, sharing ideas and suggestions. I made a written record of all of these as they were discussing them, asking for clarification or expansion as and when required. These are presented and discussed within chapter eight (presentation of findings) and reflected on in the subsequent discussion and practice development chapters.

In many ways I felt this to be the least creative activity of the day as it was purely discussion based. The content however had a significant impact on the research findings and my interpretation of them. I think the more creative forms of expression throughout the day had helped the participants reach a level of insight which enabled them to identify both propositional and practical knowledge. Their thoughts and views had already formed through the day and they were easily able to make suggestions and to appreciate different viewpoints. Many of the participants' suggestions have influenced my own development of propositional statements presented in part three of this thesis along with the the practice development component of this Doctorate in Professional Practice.

Ongoing participation

Toward the end of the workshop, we discussed how each of the participants would like to remain involved. They requested that I draft a version of the digital story to share with them and asked if this could be presented at their final day within University to their cohort. This led to the post workshop stage of the research process where contact was maintained by e-mail to share ideas and ask questions. I shared work on the presentation of the findings as I created them to gain feedback; to check for accuracy and to enable the participants to make changes in relation to identifiable information. Ideas were shared on how to develop the digital story such as writing a script which whilst using my voice would use their words; asking for a paragraph to describe how they would identify themselves for use within their individual profiles and sharing these when completed. Contact continued after their last day on the course as the participants requested copies of the digital story and continued to offer their feedback and views.

As the participants completed their course, the level of engagement varied with regular e-mail contact from some and only brief contact from others. I did give considerable thought to the contact coming to an end. I was tempted to keep sending the participants my work on the research to check for accuracy; to ensure that I had achieved the level

of anonymity that they had agreed to; and to include them in the process. I realised however that this was my anxiety and not theirs as they were all happy with what I had shared with them and did not take up offers of sharing further work. I had reached a point of writing up the findings when the work could only be my interpretation and accepted this to be the case. As previously discussed, an aim of UAI is for participants to benefit directly from the research process. Each participant, including the researcher, can take away this learning in order to inform their own practice or behaviour (Cowling 2004a, 2004b). I recognised that this no longer needed to be a group process and that the other participants had taken and used this in a way that was useful to them.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to outline the methods engaged in conducting this UAI. I have sought transparency of method by outlining each stage and reflecting on the choices made such as sampling, use of interviews and a workshop and the content and approach of each of these. Elliott (2005) suggests that when written up, research is often presented as a logical progression of stages rather than the often messy and frustrating process it usually is. My reflections within this chapter have sought to give an accurate account of my concerns and responses to these along the way. I have demonstrated my own interpretation of a UAI and my adaptation of the methods for use as both a research and an educative tool. As identified in the preceding chapter, researchers to date have used a range of methods for gaining a close picture of an individual or group experience. Explaining my own process seeks to identify my own response to this, the effectiveness of which will be explored in the remaining chapters. Chapter seven considers the ethical implications of my interpretation of a UAI within this context.

Chapter 7: Ethical considerations

Consideration of the ethical issues relating to this research inquiry involved consulting the Bournemouth University Research Ethics Policy and Procedures document (2009) and the Social Care Research Ethics Committee form for qualitative research accessed through IRAS (Integrated Research Application System). Approval was gained internally from the University's research governance and ethics review (RG2) which involved construction of a participant information sheet; consent form and risk assessment (appendices 2, 4 and 5). Questions from each of these documents and feedback from RG2 were used to guide the ethical considerations for this inquiry and are outlined in this chapter. I explore the ethical issues involved in the research design along with a consideration of the literature relating to qualitative, educational and insider research. Particular emphasis is placed on reducing power imbalance due to the nature of the research inquiry; my own desire for the methods to reflect the social work values previously identified and recognition that this can be effective in creating a positive learning environment for the participants (Rogers 1983; Knowles 1990; Freire 1993; Mezirow 1996; Cranton and King 2003; Lee and Greene 2003; Cranton 2006, Grise-Owens et al 2010; Walton 2010)

Power relations and the implications of insider research

Throughout the study I have sought to recognise and reflect on the influence of power constructs on the research design and outcomes. The student participants will have viewed my identity as an academic and a lecturer and due to our familiarity will have had preconceived views of my identity, perspectives and aims for the research. Their choice of whether or not to participate and the responses they gave may have been influenced by this perception of me. Participants may also have had views that as a lecturer, their choice to participate or not and the content of what they chose to share, will have had implications for their progress on the degree course. With regards to recruitment; power constructs and the potential for coercion were acknowledged by not approaching any student directly with a request to participate and by inviting volunteers from within the whole cohort. I think this was successful in reducing any element of coercion.

A number of methods were used in an attempt to consciously recognise, explore and minimise the power imbalances involved and the complexities of insider and outsider

identities (Coghlan 2006; Mercer 2007; Gunasekara 2007; Darra 2008). These included the use of a participatory approach; seeking informed consent; offering a level of confidentiality to the participants and the opportunity for participants to view and amend their expressions and analysis as is customary within a UAI (Cowling 2001, 2004b, 2005). Strategies for minimising power imbalances are addressed within the previous chapter on method and reflected on when discussing the quality and trustworthiness of the findings in chapter nine. The reflexive approach to my written evaluation, analysis and interpretations seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of these methods. Scott and Morrison (2005, p.179) argue that whilst the way power works may never fully be grasped, attempts to "surface the power constructs" should always be made.

My lecturer role for example, involved responsibility for the teaching, learning and assessment of the participants including first marking an assignment during the interview and workshop timescale. I considered the potential conflict of interest with the dual roles of lecturer and researcher and the potential impact or perceived impact on the students involved or on those who chose not to be involved. Alternatives to seeking participants who were currently on the course were considered. Participants, however, were a purposive sample because of their current status as students approaching the end of their undergraduate qualifying education and the perspectives they could share on the impact of this. Seeking the views of current students was fundamental to the process of a doctoral study which aimed to develop my professional practice as an educator. Whilst consideration was given to approaching students on other courses or social workers who had completed their education, I felt that this would change the focus of the study.

The existing relationship between me and the participants could be argued as having benefitted the study as trust and rapport has already been established (Coghlan 2006; Mercer 2007; Gunasekara 2007; Darra 2008). I recognise however that this may have been an assumption on my part as participants may have felt more able to share aspects of themselves with someone they did not know; who was considered to be neutral or whose view of the student may not have mattered as much. My conclusion, however, was that the process of student participation was not dissimilar from practice education sessions and practice learning workshops already undertaken as part of their social work education. I considered it appropriate therefore to request volunteers from this cohort as

long as I was explicit about the processes involved and actions taken to reduce the potential for bias, power imbalances or conflicts of interest.

One example of action taken was in relation to my role as an educator. Participants may have had concerns that my view of them, gained from the research study, may affect my assessment of them as a social work student. All of the written assignments within the social work programme are marked anonymously; a random number second marked and a sample forwarded to an external examiner. Such systems reduced the potential for conflict resulting from the dual roles of lecturer (and assessor) and researcher. Participants were made aware of the different roles and assured that their participation was not in any way assessed and would not impact on any aspect of their assessed work. This was explained in the participant information sheet (appendix 2) which students were given before choosing whether or not to participate. Whilst for me this did not prove to be a problem, I am aware that it may well have been for the participants. It demonstrates the complexity of the issues relating to insider research where there are both advantages and disadvantages and the need to acknowledge and surface these issues as they arise.

Another power construct I considered was the impact or perceived impact on colleagues. I recognised that in asking students to share their experiences on the social work course, participants may have disclosed information regarding my colleagues which may have affected my relationship, view or knowledge of them (Portelli 2008). In addition to recognising the possibility that participants may have chosen not to disclose such information because of this relationship, colleagues may also have felt vulnerable thinking that their own practice may be under scrutiny (Malone 2003; Potts 2008). Whilst this was not the focus or the intention of the research, students did reflect on particular aspects of their education to explain the impact. Whilst effort has been made to protect the identity of the participants, this is also the case for colleagues. Knowledge generated from the study can be used to further the development of the programme. Findings have been fed back to colleagues without the need to identify specific names or practices.

Darra (2008) emphasises the importance of reflection during the research process to reflect on your own role and credibility as a researcher. I have aimed to do this throughout the research process and this thesis. Issues of power and insider research and

the implications for the trustworthiness of the findings are critically reflected on in the discussion of findings chapters in particularly when considering quality and trustworthiness (chapter nine).

The following measures were also in place to minimise potential harm to the participants and in seeking their informed consent.

Consent

The concept of informed consent implies that potential participants will have a knowledge and understanding of the research process, purpose, aims and content particularly in relation to their role within it and in how any information they share will be interpreted and disseminated. As such the assumption is that they will have been able to make an informed choice on balance of the benefits and risks to themselves as to whether to participate or not. It has been argued however that by its very nature, qualitative research processes are incompatible with informed consent (Eisner 1991 cited in Malone 2003). Researchers cannot be specific about the events or issues which may emerge or how they will be interpreted. Mindful of this, I was clear about the research method, process and purpose and sought to ensure that the participants understood the relationship they were engaging in (Miller and Crabtree 1999). This clarity did not necessarily ensure that consent was fully informed. Malone, for example, argues that if the potential participant is not familiar with different types of qualitative research, then they may be less likely to question the methods. Malone suggests that the researcher adopt "a persistently sceptical stance toward the very notion of informed consent" (2003, p.813). This is supported by Marshall and Rossman's (2006, p.90) warning against the "formulaic completion of the required forms" for these reasons but also because of the cultural biases embedded in the documents and procedures.

Holloway and Jefferson (2000) encourage a shift from informed consent altogether to one which focuses on "guarding against harm" (p88) as a way of acknowledging and addressing that informed consent can never fully be achieved within qualitative research. They encourage consideration of the need to create trust, a safe environment, honesty and respect, to try and ensure that involvement is not a negative experience. Issues of trust are considered within the 'protection of participants' section of this chapter. Holloway and Jefferson (2000) argue that whilst consent, including preliminary consent should be gained, this should be part of a continual process. Consent can then

be achieved as the participant engages in the process and can base their judgments on what the process actually is and on what they have chosen to share. This in itself however raises concerns regarding power constructs and risk as already discussed.

Within this research study, I adopted a continual process of ensuring consent by seeking permission at each point of the research process. This included before, during and after the interviews and group workshop where discussion regarding the method and purpose was openly discussed, explored and influenced by the participants. At the interpretation and analysis stage, information was offered back to the participants with the option of amending, adding to or withdrawing any of the content. This option was made available up to and including a cut off date (made clear in the participant information form) at which point I was at the writing up stage and unable to remove content (Marshall and Rossman 2006). Having a cut off date did not seem to be an issue as no further requests were received to make changes after this point. I have however reflected on this further.

I considered whether participants genuinely felt able to amend, add or withdraw any of the content or to withdraw from the study completely. Every effort was made to give participants this choice. Whilst I felt that this was achieved as some participants did make changes, I can never be completely sure if this was the case. Malone (2003) argues that participants can feel very vulnerable as a result of the research process and may not feel able to make such assertive decisions despite assurances being made. There is a need to consider whether participants feel that they can withdraw without risk (Miller and Crabtree 1999). Opportunities were provided for participants to discuss any concerns with myself or with another point of contact through my supervisors, one of which was known to them and one who was not. As far as I am aware, none of them did. Participants retained control over what to share within the interview and the group workshop and it is my view that consent was as informed as possible.

Whilst seeking to share control addresses some of the issues relating to consent, due to the potential impact of the research process on the person, it does not address consent in relation to outcome and the interpretation and dissemination of information. Within this study, consent also involved participants considering the risk of their identities becoming known. I was mindful that they could be identifiable by others who knew that they were within the cohort being studied due to the uniqueness of the information they shared.

Confidentiality, anonymity and sharing of information

Whilst each participant had the opportunity to verify information they shared, I did not assume ongoing consent. Malone (2003, p.808) gives an example of a participant asking for a section of her report to be edited, not because it was inaccurate but because "if you write it down, everybody else will know it and it will be there forever". This stemmed from a belief by the participant that her identity would be known, which she had not considered prior to taking part. This too was a possibility within this study. As the published research identifies the University and programme, readers who are known to the student participants, may be able to identify them from the information they have disclosed. Every effort has been made to protect their identity including use of the following strategies to minimise this risk. Participants were also made aware that anonymity could not be guaranteed. With hindsight I think this could have been made more explicit. One of the participants described feeling less concerned at the end of the study about whether her anonymity was maintained. Whilst I endeavoured to maintain anonymity, she felt that there was nothing she had shared that she minded being read by others who knew her. Some members of the group did make changes to further anonymise or generalise their profiles.

Each of the participants chose the pseudonym which has been applied within all written documents including notes and transcripts. Participants were encouraged in the audio recorded interviews not to make reference to any real names or places (of the participant themselves or to others that they refer to). Once the interviews were underway however, names of people and places such as work settings were named but then anonymised when transcribed. Information was stored so access by others was restricted. I anonymised all information relating to the participants and have not shared their identity outside of the workshop group. I was clear that if I had any concerns for their well being as explored in the section on protection of participants, then relevant information would be shared with the appropriate people. This was not required.

Participants themselves may have chosen to discuss their involvement in the research with others. They may have shared information within the interviews and workshop which could potentially identify them to their peers and colleagues should they choose to read the final thesis or papers generated from the study or to attend a conference where the findings are presented. Identifying features such as age, gender, race,

disability, background and experiences for example are relevant to the research in understanding and appreciating the person's personal development and wholeness and in recognising and minimising any power imbalance. Whilst the programme has been identified, the participants are a small number of the larger cohort and so identity may not be obvious. Some features have been generalised so as not to unnecessarily disclose information and other features have been changed. As the participants have since graduated, they are further distanced from the course and the possibility of being identified.

Within the group workshop, participants were aware of each other's identity and knew each other from the social work programme. I did not share information obtained from the interview stage of the research, during the workshop although participants themselves did at times choose to do so. Confidentiality regarding the group workshop was discussed and agreed within a ground rule session at the start of the workshop and the same rules regarding pseudonyms were applied to any data produced. Participants were encouraged to consider the risk of information being shared and their identity being disclosed to others (Potts 2008). Whilst they were aware of assurances for work to be anonymised, they all participated and shared information based on an understanding that they may be recognised.

Whilst feedback maintained that the research inquiry had been a positive process for those involved, completion of the study did enable me to reflect on aspects that I had not previously considered. I reflected on what my reaction might have been had I been concerned about a student's competence. Ordinarily, this would inform my assessment and decisions regarding their progression and yet I had been very clear of the distinction between my researcher and educator roles and the level of confidentiality on offer. Claiming a separation of roles was perhaps naive given the argument throughout this thesis that aspects of self are merely part of a greater whole and cannot be reduced to separate parts. It would be inevitable with hindsight that learning from one perspective would impact on the other and would inform my opinion of that person favourably or otherwise. I was impressed by the participants' competence, articulation and ability to critically reflect and this will have informed my opinion of them. My approach demonstrated within this chapter has been to acknowledge this and to explore ways that these power constructs or biases can be surfaced and explored.

Protection of participants

The University's research ethics policy highlights the researcher's responsibility to make every effort to ensure the protection of participants against physical, mental, emotional or social injury. Participants were asked in the study to reflect on their own personal development which may for some have had an emotional impact depending on the individual and the information or experiences they chose to share. The emotional impact of this "should not be underestimated" (Darra 2008, p.252). Whilst the research was specific to their personal experiences, the requirement to reflect was one that the participants were familiar with as they had been working on a one to one basis with a qualified practice educator to reflect on their values, social identity, experiences and practice whilst on placement. This relationship was ongoing throughout the research process and students were encouraged to share their reflections gained within the research, with their practice educator.

Each participant also had an allocated personal tutor and was encouraged to seek support or guidance if required. Tutors were made aware of the study so they could respond appropriately if needed. Whilst names of participants were not shared, I explained to each of the participants that any concerns about their well-being or the well being of others would be, where possible with their knowledge and consent. I have knowledge of local and University support services such as counselling, help lines and support groups which participants could have been signposted to if appropriate. I was clear about my research role with the participants and so did not engage in a therapeutic relationship. Whilst participants did share personal information to them and experiences which had been and still were distressing, these were appropriate to the study as they were shared to demonstrate their learning and the impact on them. Participants commented on the usefulness of reflecting on their learning and experiences and in making these links and did not give any indication of it causing distress.

Within the interviews and group workshop, I utilised a range of skills developed through other non research roles developed during my career to minimise emotional and mental harm (as advocated by Wilde 1992 cited in Darra 2008). As a qualified and experienced social worker within the mental health field (providing both individual and group work interventions) and a social work degree lecturer, I have the skills to listen to and discuss each person's experiences and perceptions with empathy and emotional intelligence. Previous practice included working within professional social work values

and codes of practice which involve respect, dignity and empowerment. UAI methods involved open discussion with the participants and appreciation of their views and experiences. Participants were encouraged to contribute to the research both in terms of sharing their own experiences but also in sharing their views of how it may be significant in social work education. My aim was to reduce the potential for emotional harm by involving the participants and sharing control of the process. The potential for emotional or mental harm on me was also acknowledged. I have the experience and skills to be able to recognise this and address it appropriately although this did not emerge as problematic.

Possibilities of physical harm resulting from the research process were also considered in line with university ethical considerations. Interviews and the group workshop took place on University premises and a risk assessment was completed to identify potential risks (appendix 5). This included considerations such as building safety, fire safety, travel arrangements, professional conduct and the emotional impact on those involved. As a lecturer and a practice educator within the social work degree programme these were all policies and activities I have experience in considering and adhering to.

Integrity of the researcher

Whilst my experience of managing a research study was minimal, experience and skills as a lecturer and a social worker enabled me to both plan and manage the demands of this study. This included interview skills, group work skills, awareness and ability to manage difficult situations, emotional distress and sensitive information. My aim throughout was to provide a truthful and accurate account and representation of the participants' personal experience and to explore a range of ways of achieving this. I believe that by creating a safe and trusting environment and a relationship with the participants based on honesty and openness, I was able to achieve this aim.

Conclusion

Chapter seven has sought to evidence the ethical considerations informing this study. Initially these were guided by the ethical approval processes identified at the beginning of the chapter but also by the literature on the emerging issues such as insider research and power constructs. At the start of the study, I was naive as to the potential impact of the research process on participants. I have gradually recognised that the appreciative, participatory and emancipatory objectives of the research inquiry are not enough in

themselves to ensure that the process is of benefit to all of those involved. A range of methods were required to consciously recognise, explore and minimise power imbalances and these have been explored within this chapter. The extent to which this was achieved I believe is evidenced by the richness and honesty of the experiences expressed within the inquiry. These expressions are presented within the following chapter (presentation of findings) and explored within the subsequent chapters on quality and trustworthiness of the findings (chapter nine) and my interpretation of the findings (chapter ten).

Chapter 8: The presentation of findings

The research findings include a number of different materials and documents to gain as close a picture as possible to the actual experience of the participants. These draw on the four types of knowing previously discussed: experiential, presentational, propositional and practical (Heron 1996). They are presented together to create a unitary appreciative profile of the impact of qualifying social work education on a person's beliefs, values and behaviour.

The unitary appreciative profile consists of:

- Individual profiles, created in collaboration with Vicky, Terry, Jessica, Linda and Assad. Each profile includes:
    - A participant description
    - A self created thought map exploring their sense of self and the links with their beliefs, values and behaviour and with their social work education (and a recreated representation for the purpose of clarity)
    - Their individual story based on a précis of their individual audio recorded interview. All words are verbatim so as to ensure that the primary voice is that of the participant
    - Images and descriptions of the item(s) they chose to represent their experience within the workshop.

- Propositional statements suggested by the participants during the workshop, which draw on ideas and theories generated from the knowledge gained so far (Heron 1996).

- Practical statements suggested by the participants during the workshop, regarding their views on the practice, skills and competence required to act on the other types of knowledge gained.

- A group representation
    - A digital story (recorded to the attached CD) created in collaboration with the participants. The story is a synoptic representation and

interpretation of the impact of qualifying social work education on a person's beliefs, values and behaviour.

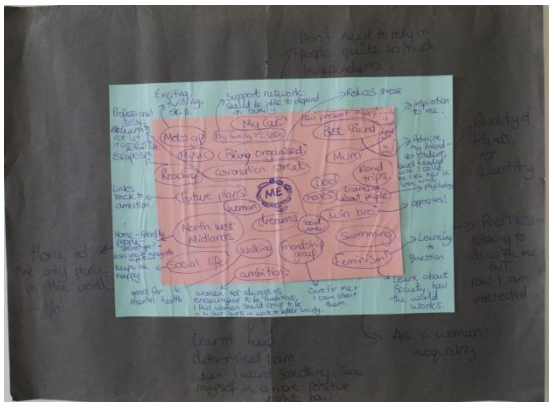
My interpretation of these representations is explored within the subsequent research and practice development chapters. The findings created a catalyst for my own critical reflection and practice development. These are identified within part three and expressed through creation of my own propositional statements in relation to the impact of social work education on the whole person. Practical knowing generated has informed the practice development component of this thesis.

Vicky

Participant description

Vicky identifies herself as a white British female in her early twenties, from the North of England. She was 18 at the start of her undergraduate social work education and she identifies herself as having changed a lot during this time. For her, the transition is one of becoming; becoming an adult, a professional, a social worker, a Feminist. The transition has been influenced by moving away from home for the first time, becoming more independent, developing new friendships, experiencing difficulties with flat mates, becoming homeless for a short time, fleeing a threatening and potentially violent relationship and becoming more politically aware.

Vicky's thought map to demonstrate her sense of self, beliefs, values and behaviour



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Vicky's story

I follow motorbike racing religiously. It takes up most of my weekends. It's funny to see boys' reactions. I'm not meant to like it. As a Feminist I like that. They don't like that I know more than them. I was brought up by my parents who would probably be described as middle class, as my Mum was a social worker but my mum and dad are from quite poor backgrounds and have quite working class values. My Dad has always wanted me to do well because he hadn't had the chance to and didn't go to a good school and so they've always pushed me to do well. I'm a twin, but we are opposites. I'm from a big family.

I'm from a really small place. I think that's become more important to me, since I moved to Uni. It's classed as a small town but it really is just a high street and everyone knows

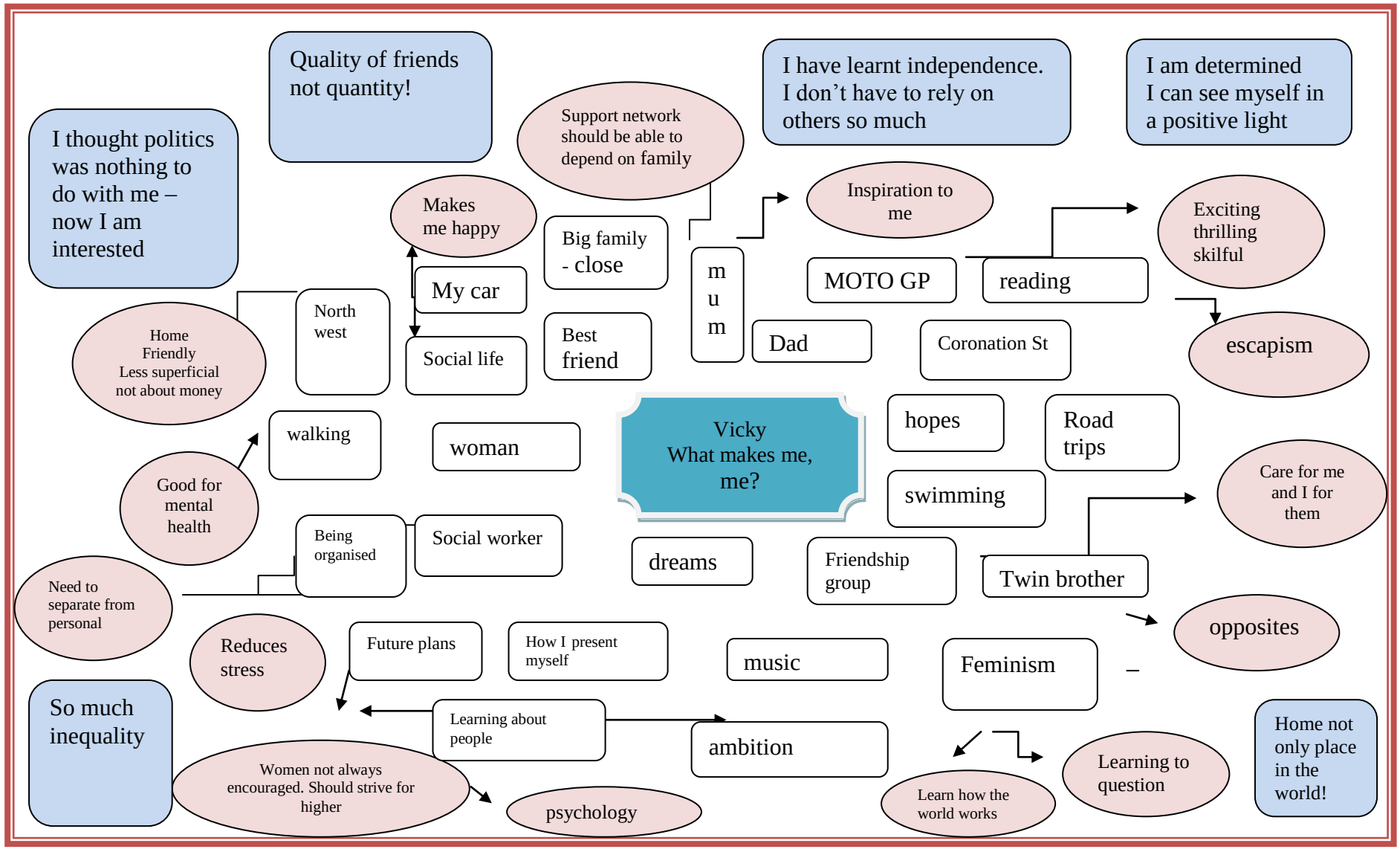


Figure 3: Vicky's thought map

everyone's business. I think people there are kind of stuck there and I think people think 'who does she think she is' just because I've gone to Uni. The more I've been away the more I've drifted away from wanting to be there. The place hasn't changed but I obviously have because I used to love it there and now I don't. I don't feel part of the conversations in the pub any more. I feel that I've got other interests or I'm not interested in what they are interested in. Their lives seem to be that they work and then they go and get drunk at the weekend and it's just not what I want to do anymore. If people say 'what do you do at Uni?' and I say social work, I've had people react in quite an ignorant way, so sometimes, I just don't say what I've been doing. I don't think when I go back home I will be the same person as when I left.

My Mum was a (social work) team manager. I used to walk to her office after school and when she used to talk about it I was always fascinated. It really interested me. Everyone said I don't think you should move away but I needed that. The experiences I've had, I don't think I would have had if I was still living back home.

When I was at school, there wasn't a great deal of black or ethnic minority people but one of my best friends was a Muslim girl and people weren't friends with her because of her colour but my Mum always taught me that you have to take people for who they are and be interested in people. I can see that even at school I had friends that were a lot different to me and have different backgrounds.

I had problems with my housemates in the 2nd year and it ended up where I didn't really have anywhere to live. Things like that, that were really awful at the time, I think have affected my grades but I think sometimes if they hadn't have happened they wouldn't have made me who I am like making me feel that I can cope with a lot more things. I think 21 is quite young to be a social worker but you know, I feel a lot older than I am at times.

Sometimes I seek out different experiences and not always good ones. Earlier this year, I got involved with someone I shouldn't have. He turned out to be violent. It was another thing I had to cope with. It's made me more streetwise. I was a bit too friendly to people. On my placement I started working with someone who had domestic violence from her husband for 12 years and I thought gosh, I had the tiniest experience, literally a week of feeling quite scared and then I sorted it out and she's lived with that for years. Whilst I

look back and think I was a bit naive, a bit stupid, it was a good experience to have because I've learnt so much from it and I was able to help her because the other worker said she hadn't known all that I had. Because I had personal experience I was able to deal with it better.

I honestly can't say what drew me to social work but I think it's the variety. With social work you can do anything. I like children; I like older people; I like working with teenagers.

(Since doing the social work course) I'm a lot more aware. I used to think that politics were nothing to do with me. I'm not interested in that. The politics unit had quite a big effect on me. I've read books on Feminism which I probably would have never looked at before and that's now becoming something that I define myself as. I think because it applies to me personally but also I didn't realise certain things that go on every day and I wasn't even aware that I am losing out, that women lose out in so many ways.

Learning about poverty and social exclusion really struck a chord with me. I remember a friend in the pub saying that people shouldn't get benefits because if someone could drive to work then they should. I remember I got really annoyed. What if they are a young carer and you can't get the education you want. It made me feel irritated that they didn't understand what I was saying.

Having service users come in has been a really good learning tool. It gives you chance to ask questions you can't ask when you are working with someone. I remember a service user came in with Cerebral Palsy; It really did change my opinion completely. I thought, actually I'd made an assumption that because she couldn't communicate very well she didn't know what was going on and I realise how wrong I was, thinking that.

The people I have met on the course have changed my outlook; they're all coming from different places. On the first day I really didn't think I was going to stay on the course. There's not one person here I can get on with. They are all different ages to me, I didn't know what to do but then when you hear certain points you think, yeah, I understand what you're saying, it doesn't matter that you're 20 years older than me or whatever. There are certain people on the course who I would never in a million years think they would want to be friends with me, I really did think that. To be honest, they've kept me

on the course, a lot of those people because of how supportive they have been during everything I've been through.

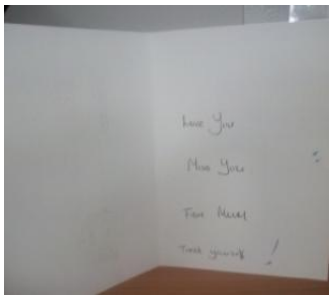
I think sometimes you find yourself looking for things that might not be there. I wanted to write about my placement in mental health and the prejudice that black people face. I remember my practice teacher kept getting me to think about areas where I had been prejudiced. I'm quite good at seeing when I have thought certain things. I'm not saying I don't have any prejudices I definitely do but I think if you've got friends who are black, you're just not going to be as prejudiced as someone who hasn't.

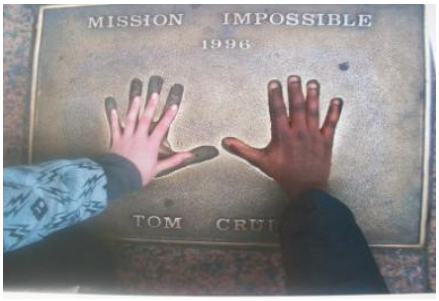
I remember my placement in supported housing we used to run a crèche every Tuesday. I got quite attached to a little baby. She was very clingy because she hadn't had the attention from her mother and because of that, I found it really hard working with her mother because I used to think the things she did were quite selfish but learning about her history, I could see she's not seen what a good mother figure is, it's not her fault but I found that really difficult. One day it was about 1 o'clock, we went into her flat because she was on suicide watch and the baby was in the cot, dirty and hadn't eaten breakfast or anything and she was still in bed because she had been out the night before drinking. I found that quite hard. It was heart breaking.

Everyone said, going away will be the making of you, you'll change. I didn't think it would. I'll always love my friends and where I'm from but I hardly go back home now. I don't particularly feel at home there anymore and I didn't expect that to happen. I feel quite worried because I don't know what to do with myself now. I don't want to move back home but it's the best thing financially. I feel a lot of dread about that.

I feel quite exhausted because of everything but at the same time I feel quite proud of myself.

A representation





I spent my 21st birthday at home

There was a moment when I realised, I'd grown apart

I didn't really belong anymore

The card was from my Mum

'love you, miss you'

It was significant that she needed to write a card.

It was because I didn't go home as much

I chose the photo of the hands together with 'Assad' when thinking about today

It's about new friendships

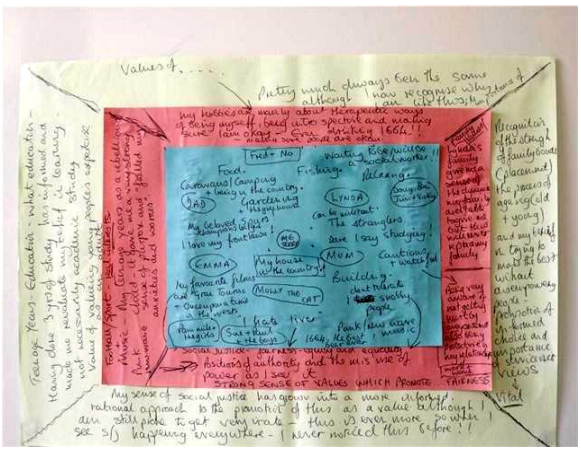
Accepting difference.

Terry

Participant description

Terry identifies himself as ‘a 45 year old, white British male, who is an atheist, has adopted what he feels are working class values as opposed to his parents middle class ones and who believes strongly in fairness, equity and that social justice is his core value’. He reflects deeply on the impact of his childhood experiences on his beliefs, values and behaviour and on the impact of social work education in shaping these further. He feels that he has experienced change and provides examples of analysing his previous experiences and behaviours following particular areas of learning within the degree. This has had an impact on current relationships such as that with his father.

Terry’s thought map to demonstrate his sense of self, beliefs, values and behaviour



Recreated for clarity in Figure 4

Terry’s story

One of the key things, having done the three years, is the impact of my upbringing with respect to domestic violence. It was from my mum to my dad, so it sort of turned everything on its head and being a man, a male, I’ve really thought long and hard and done lots of critical reflection about role and gender and stuff and thinking back to my own upbringing and seeing what my dad took from my mum, has this year had a big impact on me. I’ve found myself working directly with women who have been involved in domestic violence. I did an assessment with this woman who in her history had been subjected to a lot of extreme domestic and sexual violence. It’s made me think about my role as a male worker, going out to do an assessment with this lady. It wasn’t until after

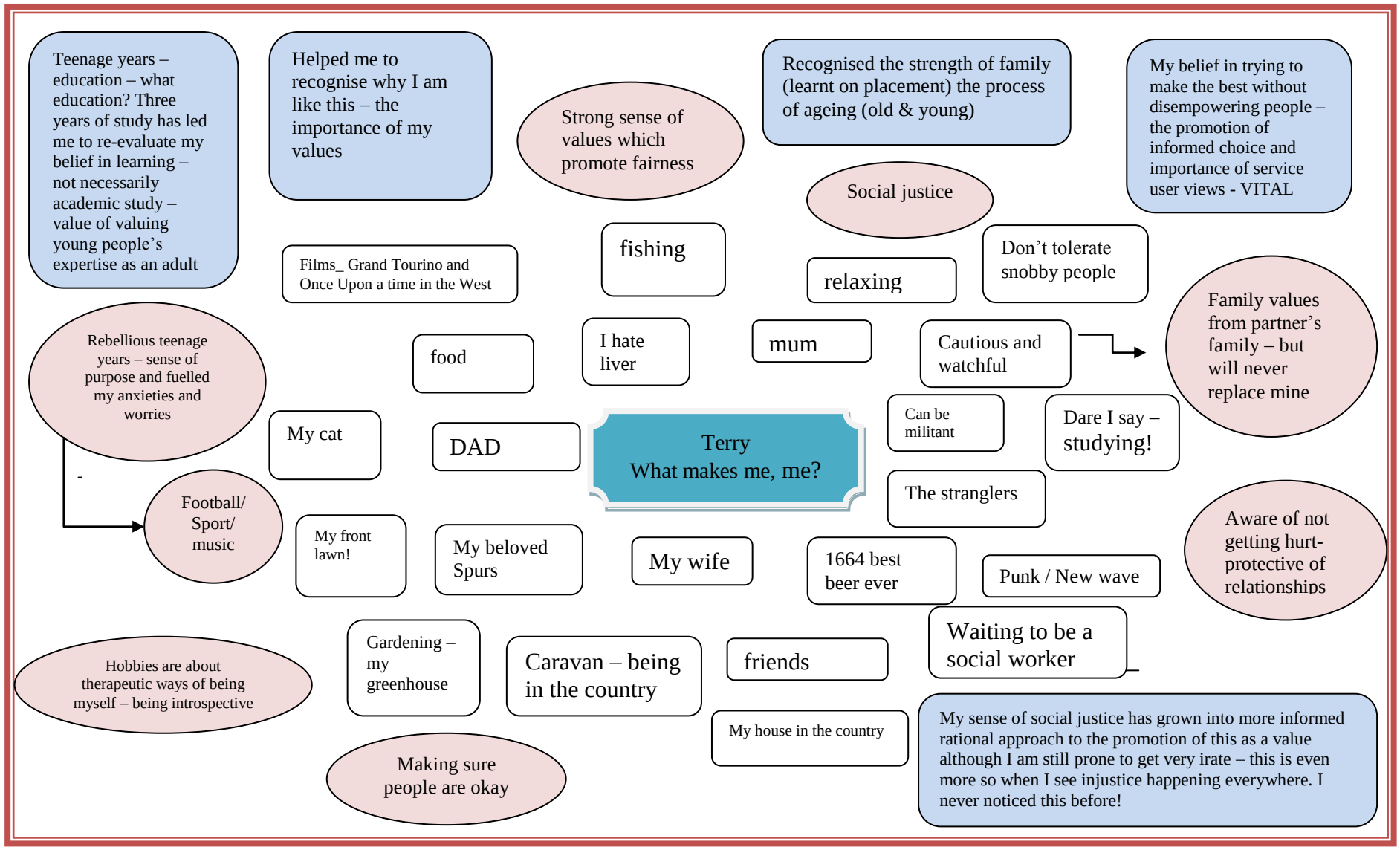


Figure 4: Terry's thought map

that I thought, I didn't even ask: do you want to be interviewed by a male? do you want a female? It was just this massive blanket assumption, that's my light bulb moment for this year.

Her daughter was younger. Although I was probably 5 or 6 years older, I was 10 or 11 when I started first realising what was going on at home. It really made me realise what the impact of domestic violence on an adult in respect of bringing up a child. I see it from my dad's perspective, he was a very disciplined, ex services chap and he never once laid a finger on my mum and she was horrendously violent toward him, all fuelled by alcohol and it just really hit home, the impact, the absolute devastation it causes on families. This woman, her parenting, I made an assumption that she would be struggling more than she was but I checked it out with other agencies and she is doing brilliantly, fantastically, really resilient. I made this assumption that things would fall apart. That really opened my eyes.

Quite a few people say oh you're really easy going and really laid back but I know what drives that. I must have been hyperly cautious as a child, having worked with a lot of children and young people now you see that sort of natural caution when things are a bit iffy at home and I think that has sort of translated itself as I grew up and got older into I think externally, I sort of projected somebody who was fairly easy going and laid back and will get on with most things and get on with everybody but behind that I was always really wary and really cautious with what was going on, always watching people for cues and signals and signs and think hmm I'm not sure about that. It does sort of work for me, that's translated into being a pretty good judge of character. I don't suffer fools gladly, I don't think. On the other hand, it's made me always try and see the best parts of people. It's made me think oh maybe if they've gone through a bit of a patch, I wonder what they are good at or what is good in their life for them.

I also have this thing with authority. It must have made me a pain in the arse when at school but it's because of my upbringing. I was no doubt very difficult, very challenging at school, always getting into trouble. I think in the third year, I had 36 weeks out of 39 in detention. An absolute pest, obviously that close to being kicked out. I just have this thing about power, for me when I look at it. My mum had absolute power over my dad and he would look for me for acknowledgment when he would come in from work about

whether mum was up for a big row or not. We had this non verbal system going, that's something else that has really had a huge impact on me. That authority thing – I'm just really wary. I have no issues with people in positions of power or authority as long as I feel that they have used that power in an okay way. It's when I get that gut feeling. There have been a few times when I have needed to challenge people, once or twice at work and once out of work but by and large I just tend to... it mixes with my natural caution which tends to spring up a bit.

I think I've got a much more level headed, balanced view. For me I've recognised a conscious change in myself. Doing this course has influenced me hugely. It's reinforced so much that I thought I knew but it's made this confirmation to me that my views and thoughts were sort of right and social work is for me. It fits with my ethos and my outlook; what I want in life – not for myself but for other people. I don't mean that as - I came into this job to help people, it's a bit clichéd but it's true, you want to make a difference, you want to challenge injustice and inequality and I always take this back to what I perceived as this real unfairness when I was a kid.

That social justice, fairness thing is a real one for me and I have to be so careful, even now, I was talking to someone the other week and I thought that's not fair and I had to think, Terry, this is not your fight to fight but I get so driven by it. Looking back now there was probably only two or three people at school, teachers wise who really took a lot of notice. They were the only ones who would come and say, look I know things are a bit rough at home, we've had a phone call from your dad, you are doing okay, that's fine, whereas other teachers would just see you as someone difficult and wouldn't look past what I was presenting as. It's always been those people who go out of the way. I think that's a real nice trait for somebody.

I was a boat fitter by trade. I'd done labouring. I was stuck. A friend worked at a residential school and they needed someone to come and do sports with the kids and that's how it started. There's been such a marked difference between now and then. I realise those traits I have, suit social work and work with people. Sometimes I think, you can do all of the training in the world but if you've got those traits built in as it were, it might give you a better advantage. I'm not putting anyone down who hasn't been through what I have been through or who hasn't got those traits but I work with some people and I think, it's that ability when you see somebody who has just got that

whatever it is, they can just engage and reach people in a certain way at a certain level and I just think blimey, how do they do that because some people have just got it. I always wanted to aspire to that.

I have to be careful not to be a rescuer. Take a step back. I take people as people. Just thinking about what it's like from another perspective. I always say to people, I'm never going to know what it's like for you because I'm not you but I can imagine that must be difficult. Be level headed and calm in a crisis. That goes back to my childhood, of living in absolute chaos. I soon learnt that the way to cope was to keep your head down or go out; that ability to work under fire in a crisis and make rational thoughts. It's not a failure to say I don't know. Not to take a leap of faith and get it wrong. As a social worker we are making decisions that affect peoples' lives, you've got to get it right.

(The course) has added so much. The knowledge base has had a huge impact. To the point where I consciously think about what research backs up what approach. I think the change for me since starting the course is that it's confirmed what I thought was right but it's made me realise there's also this raft of knowledge about anti-racism that has really changed my value base. I had a few black friends at school but I'd be the first to say we used to be pretty abusive to each other. I want to go back and apologise to people, to say sorry for what I've said. I feel ashamed and really guilty. People send you jokes and stuff and I had to say to my nephew last week, that's just bang out of order that is. Send me something funny, not that crap. It's changed my value based in terms of discrimination and oppression and that's across the board, not just with any particular service user group. My placement last year had a massive impact on my learning with older people. I came out of that placement just buzzing with what I'd experienced and what I'd got out of it. It really made me think about getting old, the ageing process. When older people say I've been through the war, I think yeah you have actually. It's made me see things from a much broader perspective.

The reflective part, this continual reflective analysis has really helped to open that up again. That's been hugely influential. Looking at how I've changed. I'm so looking forward to going back to work because I want to take all of that back with me. The way I think about things is backed up with a wider knowledge base. How legislation works and empowers or disempowers people. You learn to critique stuff like the assessment framework, what's good about it, what isn't; the service user and carer perspective. Are

we just ticking a box? I really want to get across a balanced perspective and I've got that ability now. It will add more depth to my practice.

If I'm honest I'm running on empty at the moment. I'm absolutely exhausted. I know that I've withdrawn from my family. I say to them, I'm bogged down. A good friend of mine, we've been meaning to catch up but I haven't got the headspace. I've virtually put stuff off until after the course ends. There's only so much emotional capacity I've got left. You are in the third year; you are so close to finishing. I can actually see the light at the end of the tunnel. The workload was intense. There are all of these natural anxieties for me to achieve. It's made me incredibly disciplined about my time management.

Placement for me was always the measure of how far I've come. It feels like you are out there on your own really, you're not but that's what it feels like. Working with older people had a huge impact on my practice, huge; different perspectives, social perspectives, discrimination, oppression, ageism, social exclusion, the whole lot. Working with children and families this year is different again. No day is the same. You can't replace placement. You could do another 4 years study but you can't equate being out on placement. I think this thought of cutting it down is crackers. It really makes a difference. You know if you are doing alright because of the feedback from people. That was a real eye opener. That's when you really start learning about yourself.

I don't think outwardly I have presented as any different. Inwardly I know I'm hugely, hugely changed now. I was talking to my dad and my step mum recently about stuff, like rights when you get old and ageism and stuff and I thought God, I would never have talked to my dad about ageism and stuff, ever, ever, ever. It's helped my confidence within my family. When I'm out and about with friends it probably has as well. I think I see the world through a different set of eyes now. You see oppression everywhere.

The experience as a whole has been enjoyable. One of the first things we had to do was read about anti-oppressive practice and I remember sitting on my bed reading about it and thinking is this what the next three years is going to be like. The learning experience as a whole has been really enjoyable. It sort of gives you a resilience but it is so damned hard. It really is hard work. When you finish you'll think God have I earned this. It's going to be a bit of a personal milestone to me.

A representation

I was a really huge Stranglers fan
There's a line
'Whatever happened to all the heroes?
All the Shakespearoes, they watched their Rome burn
Whatever happened to all the heroes?'
That would be my representation of the impact

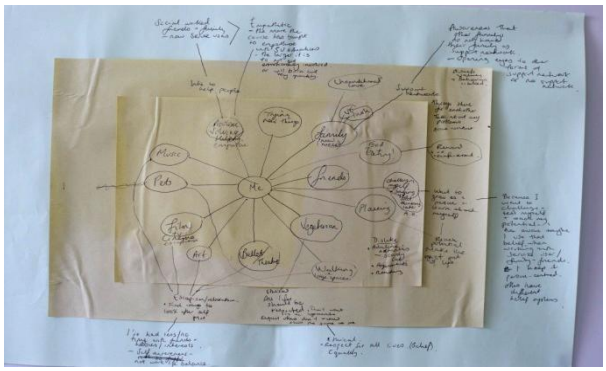
Sully lives in my car
When I'm driving kids when I'm at work, they can play with him
A kid I used to work with gave him to me, it was a gift
I saw him recently and was able to say I still had him
I have a long drive into Uni from home
I have spent a lot of time in the car
Sully is an unconditional listener

Jessica

Participant description

Jessica identifies herself as a white British, able bodied female in her early thirties. Her experience was influenced by the need to work full time throughout her three year degree and she describes feeling quite isolated at times from the year group. She acknowledged the pressure she places on herself to do well and identified the impact of this stress, in particular from placement on both herself and her relationships. She didn't feel she had changed during her social work education but did reflect on feeling different.

Jessica's thought map to demonstrate her sense of self, beliefs, values and behaviour



Recreated for clarity in Figure 5

Jessica's story

When I was 18 I did a degree in Film studies. My Mum said, what do you like doing and I thought, I like watching films! First time I left home, quite naive. I made friends for life out of it but I haven't used my film learning skills at all. I learnt more about myself than I did about film. Making films is quite a tedious process. I realised I didn't want to work in that area and I didn't want to live in London.

I did a community service volunteer programme and worked at a school for children with speech and communication problems. I was unemployed for about 8 months and got quite low at that point. There's no point waking up in the morning, filling out application forms, getting rejected. I was looking through the paper and it said - Do you fancy helping others? I thought of it for my friend. I thought she would be interested.

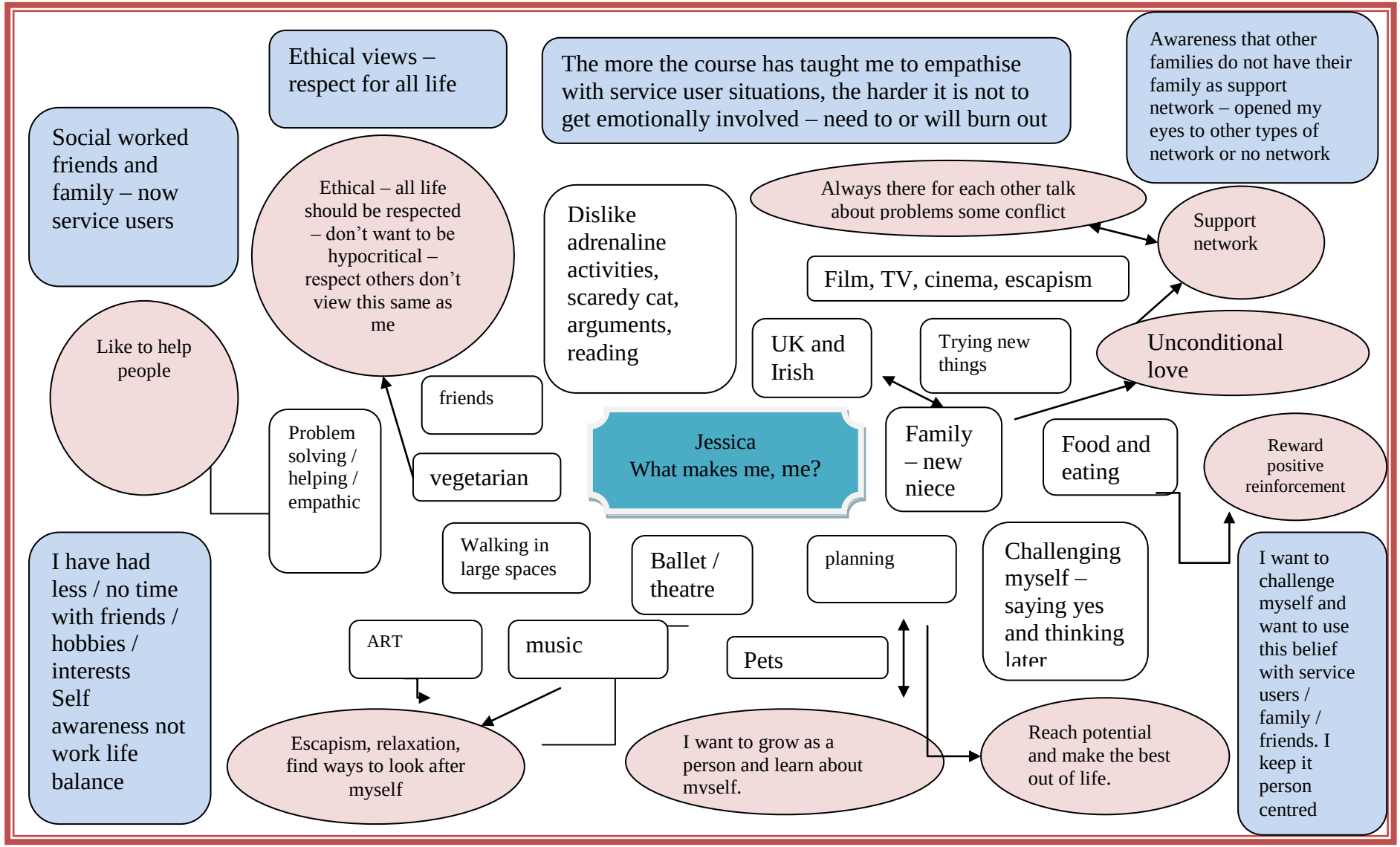


Figure 5: Jessica's thought map

She said she couldn't do it but what about me. I hadn't actually thought about it for myself! That was where it started.

A few (at the school) were Autistic and I was really fascinated by that and did a lot of work with them. I got promoted and was going to leave. I wanted more experience and they said instead of leaving, why don't you do this degree programme and so I did.

I think probably, if I were to ask friends and family, they would say I was the type of person who likes to help others. At (school for children with autism) I like working with the staff doing supervision and seeing the students develop. I enjoyed it. I felt it was worthwhile. I felt I was good at it which I probably wasn't very good at doing film. I think there's no such thing as a selfless act. I got rewarded for helping people. It's a two way thing. That's why my managers thought this would be quite a good thing. They said they would support me to re-train. My manger had done social work and she said, they'll eat you alive. It didn't put me off, it made me quite angry. I thought, no, I have got a strength she doesn't know about.

I did come into social work a little bit naive. I thought it was about helping people. Realistically it's not that easy. I still feel I'm learning. It's like I'm driving a car and the instructor is there and I am worried about having to drive on my own. I am very self aware of what areas I still need to develop. It's ironic. At (current workplace in a school for children with Autism) when I'm doing supervision, the students can be quite challenging and quite violent sometimes and sometimes new staff come along where people have been hurt and they say, when I go home I'm finding it hard to get it out of my head, should I have done something differently and I am giving them techniques for that and yet I'm finding myself doing the same thing, carrying the cases home. Bless my boyfriend, the other day, everything he said made me stressed – do you want a cup of tea NO. I had to tell him to go into the other room. I'd seen a family in crisis, who were so relieved at me helping them. It was almost like I'd walked away and I felt like I was carrying all of their stress. It was a really weird feeling, that I couldn't stop thinking about them. I had to go to sleep with the blazing telly on. Anytime there was silence, I had the image in my head. So there are still times like that, I need to develop.

My mum is the closest thing you will ever meet to an angel. She is loving and giving and I suppose that's my role model – to always put someone else before yourself. However,

she does it to such a degree, that people walk over her and my dad is the complete opposite. He's – everyone is out to get you – there's no good people in the world. So I've had those two balances. I'd say I am more on my mum's side but I keep that strength – don't be trodden on. I would say I was a kind person. I have always believed in equality, since growing up, when I was little, seeing poverty for people. It used to really annoy me at school when I saw bullying. My sister was two years older and this boy was bullying her and I confronted him. I must have been tiny but I said stop bullying my sister. He was actually the teacher's son so it wasn't the greatest move in the world! I don't like injustice.

I struggled throughout school academically. It was in the first term here that I was diagnosed with Dyslexia. I always knew, even at primary school. The teacher often said I think she has, but I put a lot of pressure on myself to do well and they worried that if I was labelled with Dyslexia, I would beat myself up about it and think I was at a disadvantage from everyone else, they thought she is finding it difficult but she is surviving. At 16, my parents were surprised that I wanted to do A-levels and at 18, surprised that I wanted to do a degree. They know how much stress I put myself under and people who know me said, are you sure you want to do this? I was so excited, this is great. I'm focussed. I'm not going to spend hours studying. It hasn't quite worked out that way as I have fallen into bad patterns.

My first degree was a very social experience, learning about myself, learning to live on my own. I remember the mature students would always go and ask the lecturer questions. This time I wanted to learn and take every opportunity to learn. However, because there are so many dominating people on our course, that just got quashed. On my last course, there were just a few mature students, whereas on this course most people are and I think I just fell in the area where there were younger people than me that like the social experience, living together, and then the older ones who had families and have that connection. I was the one, I was working full time throughout the course. It took a while to know where I was in the group and I did feel quite isolated for a while. They all had their groups. I had never experienced that before because I'm a sociable person and have always found it easy to make friends. If I see people, I bring them into the group. It was a horrible experience in the first year. I didn't know how to belong. I was really conscientious. I tried to go to all of the lectures. I enjoyed the learning but was quite miserable.

I still feel some of the personalities in the group are very dominating. I walk along the corridor and say hello to someone off the course and they ignore me. There is a lot of politics within the course. There are some people with a lot of experience and it's all about challenging and everything but there are lots of hierarchies within the group which I wasn't expecting. I thought with social workers it would be a really tight group. I was really disappointed. I thought, why have they selected me for this course. I'm not the person they are looking for.

I think you need to look at yourself before you can start helping others. I know some counselling courses, you get counselled personally before you start counselling others. That would be good within this course, to really dig at yourself and become more self aware. I think I am self aware anyway, I have always been but it would have been beneficial to talk through a few things. I think I've only had one supervision since I have been here. The lecturer always said if I had any problems to come and see them but I've never really had any big problems. I just think it would have been nice, besides placement. Placement is really good because you get to sit down with somebody and it may be a little thing but if it's not dealt with it can become a big thing. It would have been nice to have had more time to just talk about your experiences and to reflect with someone else.

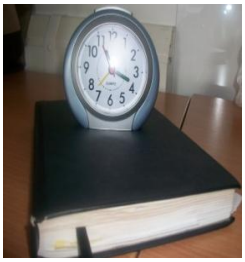
Within my family, they always joke because I always challenge them. They say something and I pounce on it. I've always done that. They laugh at me and now they say, you blooming social worker. Outside, I think the course has made me more confident to challenge injustice with people outside of my friends and family where I know they would accept it. Outside, I would be worried about upsetting someone but I'm now more confident but I would do it in my style.

My family do have prejudices but I have not. I don't know where that's come from. It must have come from somewhere. I must have seen some injustice that makes me feel that way. I must have seen some incident but I can't remember. I'd like to know where it came from. My grandmother was very dominating and didn't treat my mother very well and my father is very dominating. I've always told my mum –you're great - stand up for yourself. She always said without me I couldn't, she wouldn't have - she is much stronger now but she used to let everyone walk over her, maybe it's that.

I feel I have a lot more knowledge than before. It's expanded. I see things in a fresh light, choices, opportunities, things like that. In every aspect, I would say I had more knowledge and that gives me more confidence. Sometimes, I will be doing something, when a particular piece of knowledge or a lecture comes to mind. There have been a few lectures which have been very powerful for me. A few lecturers are very passionate about what they say and I feed off that, I love it. When they speak it is inspiring. There are a handful that I learn a lot from and they go into my long term memory. They have made me see something in a new light. Look out of the box. I am an in the box thinker and I have to really work to see things out of the box. I think this course has helped me do that and see things from new perspectives. Sometimes when I am working, I think why are they doing this, there is no logic to it, especially with older people which I find harder. I think there is a really simple solution but they don't want to take that – it's really trying to step into their shoes and see their beliefs, their values, their political ideologies or whatever and recognise that they are different from yours. That's something I will always have to work on when I think I am right!

I feel older. I feel different. At different stages I feel different. Sometimes I feel more confident and then I will feel totally incompetent and I lose all of my confidence. At this stage in the course, I feel burnt out, emotionally, brain wise. I know some of the other students are going straight into jobs and I don't know how they are doing that because I know I need a break. To look at everything in a fresh light and then think, okay what decisions do I want to make. What is my next step? It's hard to know how I have changed. I did ask my friends and family if I had changed. They said you are more stressed! I think probably, before I would challenge things but now I challenge things and I have a better argument. I have more weight to my argument which is good because then I usually win! Before I was just like – because it's wrong. Now I can say because.

A representation



Three years of diaries and a clock

Everything is part of a schedule and is organised

I find it quite comforting

Knowing what I am going to be doing for the next year

Having it all planned out

It represents the need to juggle and manage everything

I had a significant birthday and my niece was born

I can think back to that day and I know what assignment I was working on

I could only allow a short amount of time to celebrate.

I had to get back to my assignment

I'm not sure about not knowing what's coming next

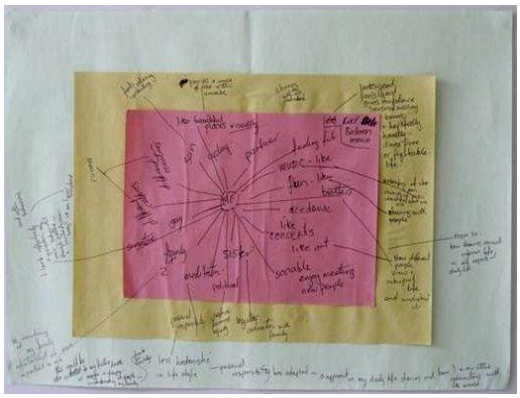
I'm programmed now to work at this pace, I can't stop now!

Linda

Participant description

Linda identifies herself as female, Scottish British, 42. Linda started the course with a strong sense of her identity and her values and a political interest and awareness. She didn't expect any huge changes to self during her social work education but believes that small changes have occurred. Change for her has been about becoming more open minded (and recognising that she wasn't as open minded as she had thought before); becoming more reflective and considered in her thinking and reflections and communicating more openly. She reflects on the impact this has had on her practice but also on her relationships and friendships.

Linda's thought map to demonstrate her sense of self, beliefs, values and behaviour



Recreated for clarity in Figure 6

Linda's story

I like music, really, really like music. I'd like to learn to play the saxophone. I started before I came and I want to take it up again. I'd like to do music properly. I like to create music. Maybe arrange it seriously. I've always been interested. I think I'm alright at it. I've had lessons and they say I'm quite good. I like lots of different types of music. I go to gigs.

I remember a young person challenging me on placement when she asked me what I will do when I'm finished and I said, I'm going to be a qualified social worker, she stormed out. I'm never talking to you, you're a twat. She came back in and we talked for 10 minutes, I said come and sit with me while I write a letter. She sat down with me and

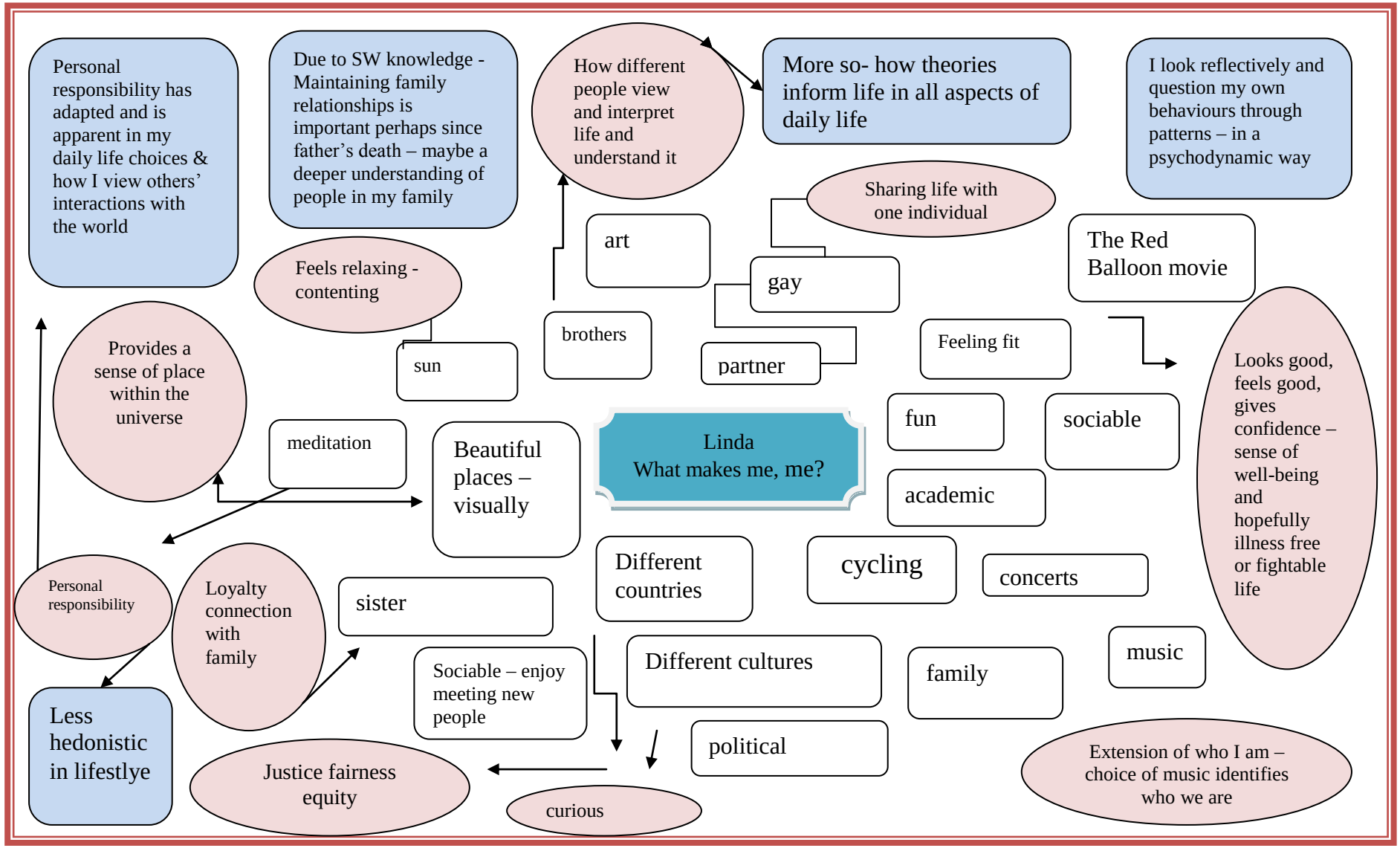


Figure 6: Linda's thought map

asked me why I wanted to be a social worker and I told her the story about me at 16 and she said, oh okay, it's because you want to help people, that's alright.
When I was 16, just left school, I got a job, a YTS job in a day centre with the elderly. I got a buzz out of it and I learnt a lot there. I thought then at 16, this is what I want to do but I worked there and went off and got other jobs and it got put on the back burner for a while. I found it really interesting, going out into all sorts of different houses, different types of characters and how they all came into the same place. The day centre was a new thing in the late 70's, early 80's. It was half run by social services and half by the NHS, it was a joint thing. There were people with strokes in that side and then when they needed the social thing, they came to our side but I was always drawn to the social side. I think that was there even before I got the job; how I always viewed the world as I grew up.

My family was quite political. That's where it comes from. What happens in people's lives is as a result of their environment; that whole socialist thing. The environment says a lot, not about who you are but about where you are allowed to go, that whole class thing. Even though we talk about it, my family fit themselves within that, those boundaries. It's like they've said, that's the way it is. I think I'm maybe a little different than that, maybe I am maybe I'm not. When I did want to do further education, I had to do that myself. It was always, what do you want to go and do that for, there's no need, just go and get a job. My aunty was quite influential. She went off into education and was always working in different places. I thought, if the girl down the road from me can go and do a social work degree, why can't I. I don't see myself as any different from anyone who does do that.

(The social work degree) probably affects how I interact with individuals. Sometimes, I think of some of the things I might have said or done and I cringe a little bit. Like when I thought I'm right on something and in part that might be down to age but maybe not. Maybe I was less tolerant then. I thought I was being open-minded but I wasn't. That's about sitting and reflecting back on things. I've come across people who are similar or situations now and realised that how I approach a situation now, in the past I've done it completely different.

The same things are important to me now fundamentally. That people treat other people – as a two way thing is important; gaining respect, social work values. That could come

from my family background too; there was a lot of that around. It's a really Scottish thing to say 'that's not fair', a real sense of social justice. What's right and wrong?

In placement, there was this situation with this woman, none of her children live with her and I think had been treated really unfairly historically and her life was no better and for me the only thing I thought I could do, because I can't change all of that, is be completely honest with her. This is how its viewed because....and just give her that kind of information really, so she knows why decisions are being made; who is making them, why they have that power and why she is not looking good in the scale of things. That's what this place (uni) has taught me. If I have to be working in that really structured, local authority, powerful environment then it's about how I work with that person. That's what I don't want to lose. It's quite important really.

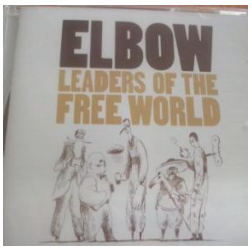
On the outside, I can come across as very confident. It's something I've really considered. I think I'm caring and compassionate. That goes way back. It was one of the things highlighted back in college and yet you don't hear much about that anymore in social work. I came across a situation the other day and I thought my god, where's your compassion. She kept talking about this woman's children who she hadn't had access to for ages. It was all about them and not about this woman who was sitting there.

The depth of statutory work was a surprise and really hit me last year. I feel sometimes for a service user, once they are in, they are in. It's so big with all of those systems and different professionals. You get a little bit of insight into how a service user may feel and how that may be a reason why someone may not want to take up services.

I think I came into the course with a knowledge of what I might be doing and when I first started the course, I was really aware of where my values came from. So I wasn't expecting any real big changes but there has been little changes from me just being aware of where they came from but they are not solid. They are the foundations but it doesn't mean they can't change; they're a little more fluid I think. It's not black and white all the time. There's so much knowledge and views of why it is; how it is. Someone said to me, you forget, they are all just theories and there's many, many of them.

I think there is a difference between me now and at the beginning of the course, maybe in the past year. I'm more reflective. I do it quicker and more self consciously, not more sensitive but more measured; a bit wider by looking at my impact a bit more. I think I try and do that even when not working. My friends think I am more open. Maybe I have clocked little bits about how I am interacting with people but for them to say, that is really nice. Stuff may come to me later when I see the big chunk. Now I'm only picking up on little things it will only be when I step away that I might see more changes.

A representation



The Streets: ‘it was supposed to be easy’

So much of this album is representative for me

The title fits with how I feel

The lyrics are a social commentary

He lays it bare – is honest

He thanks everyone who has ever ‘dissed’ him for giving him focus

I’ve listened to the Streets and Elbow so often during the 3 years.

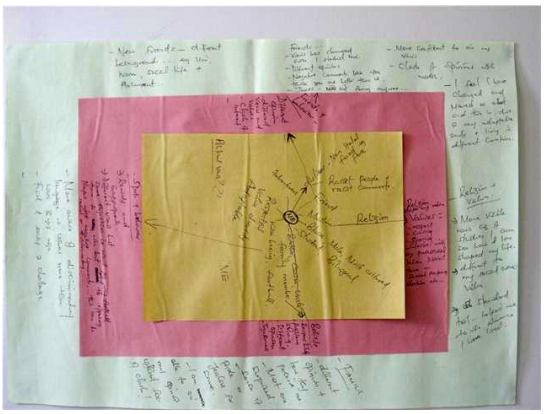
It’s become my soundtrack

Assad

Participant description

Assad identifies himself as a Black, Muslim, bi-lingual male with a multi-cultural background. His experience of social work education is characterised by significant challenges and changes to his own values and beliefs. He lives his life under the direction of his Muslim values but explains how many of his cultural beliefs were challenged through his learning within the social work degree. This in turn led him to question aspects of his culture and his own behaviour and develop a value base that could be congruent to both his personal and professional beliefs and values.

Assad's thought map to demonstrate his sense of self, beliefs, values and behaviour



Recreated for clarity in Figure 7

Assad's story

I speak four languages – Somali, Swahili, Arabic and English. I grew up speaking my mother tongue Somali. Swahili I spoke in school because it was in a refugee camp. At school we spoke Swahili and English but also learnt to speak Arabic in the evenings because they teach you the Quran. I can write them fluently and speak them fluently.

For 10 years, I lived in different refugee camps which bordered different countries, so I learnt the different languages. Sometimes I think in the different languages. That's a challenge. I moved here 12 years ago. I moved to this town 3 years ago to do this course.

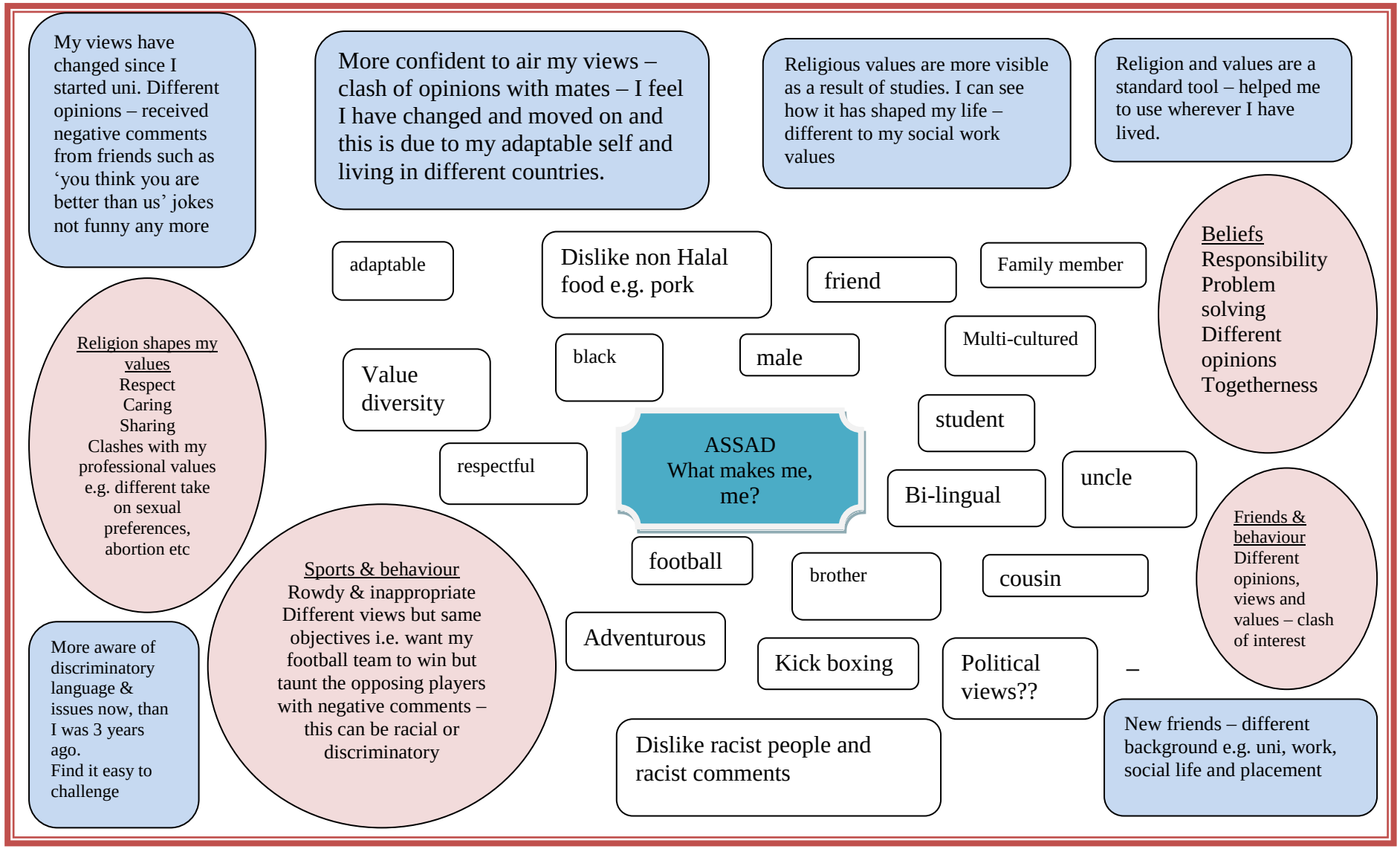


Figure 7: Assad's thought map

(In refugee camps) you don't get stability of life, because I didn't have parents either. My mother died when I was born and my father when I was 7. You end up living with Aunts and Uncles and extended family. You are always not first on the list. The longest I have stayed with someone was my Aunt; that was for 5 years when I moved here. I've got my sister, my Aunt and lots of cousins. It helps to have people – your own family.

My values are shaped by my religion to be honest because I am Muslim. I cannot say I follow most of Somalian values but I stick to my Islamic values. You have to respect everybody; have to be faithful, pray 5 times a day. If you do good things, good things happen to you. Sort of the karma principle but indirectly. Treat others as you expect to be treated. Now, I have to balance my social work values with my Muslim values. There are so many differences. If you look at discrimination, if you are Muslim, you can't talk with Gay people. Although you are allowed to work with women, they have a different role in society so that is another challenge with the course. In my own culture, mental health and disability is like a big curse, so that's another thing. I challenge them. My social work education has changed how I see things. My uncle, I remember when I was young, now I understand that he was suffering from Schizophrenia but then, they said he had an evil spirit so nobody gave him any proper help or medication. They used to let him out in the sun all day. I regret now, I wish I could challenge it. I did ask my Aunt one day, why did we treat him that way, he needed help. Why did you make him sleep out in the sun? She doesn't have any answers. She sticks to her old view. I think she understands that there is medication now, there is other help. The thing is, for them, they read the Quran to them. They need divine intervention, that's their whole idea.

I used to be a youth worker. In the refugee camps there were a lot of non-governmental organisations. They did a lot of social work. I was interested. I used to do sessional youth work here and wanted to continue doing that. You had to go out and meet people. I thought that was a good opportunity, a good challenge. I still meet some of them. They say, oh I remember you. One of them is a youth worker, so successful. One of my mentors said, don't do youth work just do social work.

At the (homeless hostel where I work now), doing an assessment and giving someone a bed is an achievement; moving them to a rehab place; when you've found the accommodation. We do independent living skills – budgeting skills, cooking skills.

Teaching someone that, I always feel pleased. One thing I have learnt is respect. If you respect them – most of them lead chaotic lives. If you show respect, you get respect back.

I have changed. The way I see people; the way I treat people; the way I think about stuff. I reflect more. I question, I question my own judgments much more than I used to 'why did I do that? Was that necessary? What I have learnt from the course, the information I have – you are never too old to learn. In my family my nephew said he was gay. Every member of the family was angry. Their idea was to take him back to Somalia. It happens a lot when kids are naughty. They take them back; take their passports and leave them there and I don't think that's fair. I told them, it is his choice. They were not happy with me. Why are you supporting him? Why are you encouraging him? Including my own sister, she didn't talk to me for a while.

(SW education) has had a big effect, including on my friends. One way I am with my friends, is that we fight, most of the comments we make are discriminatory. A few years ago I thought that was funny. I don't find it funny anymore. They have not changed; they are making the same jokes. I am more educated now. I know what is right and what's wrong. I have expanded my horizons if that makes sense. They say you've changed, they say that in a critical way. I don't fit into their values because I don't think they are funny anymore. Not all of them but most of them. I think now I know who my good friends are. They are understanding. I've got friends from the course, from work. I've got football friends.

I think I'm a changed person. I still feel that I am still the same but I've changed. I've retained most of my personal values and beliefs. My foundation is still the same. How I see things have changed. When I started the course - how I am at work now since then, is different. Now I challenge members of staff. I never did that when I started. We do handovers and they say negative things – you know him, he does that always. I don't think that's right. At first it was a negative response. Now, whenever I'm in handover, they know what to say. I think because I question a lot, most of them have changed their thinking because they have social values also.

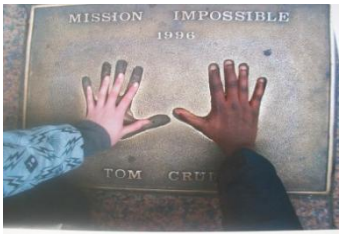
The values are sometimes in conflict. It's just a different take. Like with my nephew. I think I am the person who is able to fit them together. My friend used to be a social worker and he is a Muslim. He never used to take certain cases. Someone else had to

take them, so it affected how he works. I told him he was in the wrong profession. He has changed it now anyway. I think that's the best way to work; to question and challenge your own values. I used to keep quiet and it would affect me when I went home – oh I should have said something but now, I just say something.

I think (this course) is the best thing I have done. That's all I can say. I have learnt a lot. It's made a big difference. It is a long lasting change whether I like it or not! From the first year, I am a different person. I know what anti discrimination is; what oppression is; mostly its social exclusion; social work interventions, the eco-map, life story – that was interesting for me – the family tree - okay that's where I came from. It's been an amazing experience.

I think by doing the course, different modules, you learn to speak up. I cannot say specifically what has changed my life. I think personally, I see things differently now. I'm proud. A few years ago if you had said I would complete a degree in social work I've had said no. I was kicked out of 3 schools and never finished my GCSC's. I had to go to college to finish my education. I think because I had a chaotic life. When I came to England I was in my teens. I've done a lot of naughty things so I take that experience with me. I think it has made me who I am now. Sometimes I think if I didn't do what I did, I wouldn't have done all I've done. My family most of them, never thought I would finish school. Now they hear I am at university, they think something is wrong. They don't know who I am now. They still have the picture of 10 years ago.

A representation



The hands are a photo of me and a friend I made on the course.

It symbolises difference

The hands symbolise friendship

Mission impossible is how it feels sometimes

I used this bike to cycle to Uni everyday

The bike represents a journey

There are times when it’s hard work going up hill

Sometimes it’s a breeze, freewheeling down hill

Over the three years I have made changes and repaired parts.

It has a new wheel.

It’s the same bike but its parts have changed

I’m the same person but I’ve adapted.

Propositional knowing is described by Heron (1996) as an expression of statements which draw on ideas and theories of the knowledge gained so far. The participants provided the following propositional statements within the group workshop. These have informed the development of my own propositional knowledge as explored in chapter ten.

Propositional knowledge generated by the participant group

It's more than just an academic course

It impacts on your sense of self and your identity

It has made my beliefs more tangible

It has been a confirmation of my beliefs and values

I question my own values and judgments

I am more understanding of other people's beliefs

I am more able to accept other people's beliefs and values

If I disagree, I can walk away

It changes your personal life

It has given me the ability to separate out my personal and professional values

You are taught things that you realise that you will need to commit to for the rest of your life

You see justice and injustice everywhere

I've seen myself change. I want to get back the person I was but with all the added bits!

You have to be disciplined and selfish to complete the requirements of the course

I've got less time for some friends because of their ignorance

I question family members and make them think about what they say

It's tough

Figure 8

Practical knowing identifies the practice skills and competence required to act on the other types of knowledge gained (Heron 1996; Cowling 2004a). The participants were asked to consider the implications of the knowledge generated so far, for themselves, the social work profession and social work education. Their own contributions are listed here and have been used to generate practical knowing for this study as a whole as incorporated into part three of this thesis in the practice development chapters.

Practical knowledge generated by the participant group in relation to themselves:

I've learnt the importance of sharing knowledge

I will give myself a pat on the back. This is something to be proud of

This research has been part of the process of ending

Reassuring that our experiences have similarities – it's been tough for others

My life experiences have led me to where I am now

If my mum hadn't been a social worker, I wouldn't have had a clue

Every experience should have put me off and it didn't!

I can see how far I have come

Practical knowledge generated by the participant group in relation to the social work profession:

I feel equipped for practice

It feels like when I passed my driving test and I now have to go out on my own

I still feel I have got something to prove because of my age

I'm excited, am I really going to do that?

I don't want to lose that link with evidence based practice

My worry is if social work education reaches such a high academic level; will it loose or exclude people who are part of a valuable workforce?

Adverts have glamorised social work in a way it is not (it shows the social worker sitting and having a cup- of tea)

Need to show a more realistic picture to attract the right people – it would also challenge misconceptions

I worry that social work is becoming so over-regulated

Practical knowledge generated by the participant group in relation to social work education:

For educators to understand the impact of this course on personal life and vice versa

For educators to help with personal difficulties when needed

The importance of staff modelling values – remaining accessible, fair

Educators' awareness of the demands of placement and the impact of being judged all of the time – worrying about not having time to be ill

It would have helped to have been helped along the journey more – to enable a slow, developmental change – supervision and tutorials re: self development and support – somewhere to share experiences

The importance of sharing experiences of impact

Figure 9

Group representation: Digital story

As explained in chapter six, the participants collaborated to create a group representation of their experience. The aim is to represent the impact of social work education on the whole person. Images were chosen and shared by the participants to represent this impact. I developed the narrative by drawing on statements from the individual interviews and matching these to the visual representations. To create a synoptic representation, the digital story is presented using one voice.

The reader is encouraged to view the digital story now. This is accessed via the attached CD.

All of the knowledge generated by the participants within the study and presented here as a unitary appreciative profile are discussed and analysed further within the interpretation of findings chapter (chapter ten) and the practice development chapter (chapter eleven). As part of these discussions I have added my own interpretation of the findings and suggestions for propositional and practical knowing generated as a result of the research inquiry. This in turn seeks to generate further experiential, presentational, propositional and practical knowledge in relation to the experience of social work education.

Before considering my own interpretation and identifying what knowledge has been generated by the research inquiry, it is important to first consider the trustworthiness and the quality of the research findings. This discourse forms the basis of chapter nine.

Chapter 9: Trustworthiness and quality of the research findings

The discussion of the research findings is separated into two chapters. This, chapter nine explores the research process itself and reflects on the trustworthiness and quality of the research findings. It draws on literature relating to research design and UAI to explore issues which emerged and strategies engaged to improve the value and credibility of the findings. These included:

- Participant validation
- Interpreter bias
- External audit and peer review
- Thick description
- Triangulation
- Consideration of its usefulness

I also provide critical reflection on my own learning, resulting from my engagement with the research process.

Creswell (1998 cited in Frankel 1999) suggests that at least two of the following should be present in any research study to verify the data: triangulation, prolonged engagement, peer debriefing, thick description, member checking, external audits and searching for confirming and disconfirming cases. This study incorporates member checking; external audits, thick description and triangulation, each of which are explored within this chapter along with the use of reflexivity and consideration of the usefulness of the findings.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity is used in this study, as a method of consciously recognising and critically reflecting on the impact of my involvement within the research study and my influence on the knowledge which has been generated (Elliott 2005). In chapter one I used Cournoyer's (2000, p.35) quote that in social work "you become the medium through which knowledge, attitudes and skills are conveyed" (cited in Reupert 2007, p.107). This is as relevant for the process of research particularly qualitative research where I am the medium for the stories and experiences the participants have shared. Reflections

have been incorporated throughout this thesis within the personal narrative from the initial decisions regarding what the research should focus on through to the discussion of the findings and the implications for practice development. This is a fundamental component of the Doctorate in Professional Practice but also of my own whole person approach to transformative learning and research as argued throughout the thesis. My aim is to engage with the knowledge being generated by exploring the meaning for me and the implications for my practice as an educator and a researcher as well as for education generally. In terms of the quality and trustworthiness of the findings reflection is used to capture my own thought processes regarding decisions made and my own evaluations of the strategies used so as to surface the influence I have had on the findings being presented.

Participant validation

The concept of participant validation and member checking is commonplace in qualitative research (Crabtree and Miller 1999) as a method of checking the accuracy of data. Cowling (2004a) identifies this as fundamental to achieving credibility and legitimacy within the UAI process and argues that this is achieved due to the high priority given to participation; the egalitarian relationship between the researcher and the participants; and the requirement for the primary voice of the pattern profile to be that of the participants even when completed by the researcher.

I would argue that this was one of the strengths of this research design, a view which is supported by feedback from the participants and demonstrated by their level of engagement in the process. There is some debate in the literature, however, regarding the use of narrative interviews and whether these produce less accurate data than more structured and standardised interviews due to the distortion of experience by the participants (Elliott 2005). Distortion is argued to be as a result of the participants' attempts to make sense of that experience rather than simply to report what happened. I would argue however that this was a benefit to this study in achieving a close representation of their experience. Due to its focus on the whole person, the aim was to gain insight in to what this experience was like for them and what they perceived this impact to be. The aim was to seek their perspective. This involved them expressing their experience in relation to their own lives as well as describing what the experience had been. The inquiry therefore openly sought this subjectivity. Using a narrative approach was effective in gaining a sense of the person and a less fragmented experience (Mishler

1996 cited in Elliott 2005) than a structured set of questions. It made the interview, narrative and content, unique to each participant.

Borkan (1999) suggests that member checking or participant validation can also include the opportunity for participants to give their opinions, reactions and clarifications to the research process. This also forms part of the participatory nature of UAI as demonstrated within chapter six in relation to this study, where participants contributed to the research design. Participants did this in terms of the content of the workshop; the various methods of expressing their experience; and their views on what others could learn from this. On reflection however, as previously explored in chapter seven (ethical considerations), there are many issues relating to power constructs, insider research and the participants' perceived role in the research process, that will have affected their ability or willingness to give feedback on the process itself. Whilst they described being actively involved and appeared to take a shared ownership of the work produced, I believe that they still viewed it as my research study. Whilst I had a good rapport and relationship with the participants, this may have increased their desire to show willing; to support me, or not to offend me, by being critical of the process. There may have been other ways and better ways of generating the types of knowing that were not surfaced for these reasons.

Despite this, there were strategies I was able to incorporate to seek feedback on the research process. I was able to seek ongoing feedback, for example, throughout the workshop. As we worked together over the day, the atmosphere was relaxed with ongoing conversation and discussions. There was ample opportunity for me to evaluate the participants' level of interest and engagement with the different activities and the effectiveness of each activity in generating types of knowing. Participants made comments as we went along. Together, we were able to adapt the day accordingly by choosing when to move on or how to gather or present certain information. With regards to trustworthiness and quality of the findings, I think the range of methods used throughout the research process, ensured that although participants may not have felt able to comment directly, they were able to choose processes that suited their own style and which better enabled them to express and analyse experiences that were of value to the research inquiry. Linda, for example, found the use of images and music to be effective catalysts for her further reflection. It enabled her to identify significant aspects of her experience of social work education. Jessica, who described herself as more

private, appeared to find the individual interview more conducive to her own critical reflection and was able to share her reflections more openly in this environment. Processes were flexible enough to accommodate these preferences. The range of methods was effective in gaining a richness of data from all of the participants, which I do not think would have been achieved through just one of these methods. It provided the opportunity to tailor the research process to each individual, making it unique to them (Heron 1996).

Whilst seeking to demonstrate quality and trustworthiness, participant validation was also used as a catalyst for further reflection and analysis and to enable both me, as the researcher and the participants, to better understand the experience being expressed. Validation helped to gain an even closer representation of their experience. I am aware that it may also have served as a 'disorientating dilemma' which Mezirow identifies as the fist of the ten phases of transformative learning (Mezirow 2003) or conscious-raising as identified by Friere (1993). Viewing the data or my interpretation of their experiences may have led the participants to further clarify and make sense of their experience in order to express it. In response to questions asked in the interview for example, Jessica commented, "I don't know, I have never thought about it like that", before going on to analyse her experience.

Attempts to capture the participants' experiences created a catalyst from which to further reflect. When, for example, an interpretation did not quite resonate for a participant, this lead them to consider why and to explain or analyse this further. When Jessica expressed her experience by showing three years of diaries, for example, she explained that she felt her every hour had been accounted for. Some of the group agreed that they were looking forward to space and flexibility. Jessica however, was able to express that she had liked the structure and was concerned and anxious about a lack of structure when the course came to an end. The ability to express, reflect and clarify meaning in this way forms part of the process of self discovery and reflexivity identified by Rogers (1983); Knowles (1984) and Mezirow (2003) and which is valued by contemporary social work as explored in chapter one. It enabled both me and the participants to gain a closer understanding of the experience of social work education as well as the individual them self being able to explicitly identify and express their thoughts.

Sharing the digital story with the participants also created a catalyst from which to reflect further. I asked each of the participants whether it reflected their experience and what in particular resonated for them. Their responses were:

Vicky:

> Absolutely loved the digital story I thought it was brilliant, even made me shed a tear! Think that's because it very much represented what uni was like for me, especially the beginning part, feeling isolated at first etc. So thanks again for sending it to me.

Terry:

> I thought that the digital story was fantastic, I found myself getting a tad emotional watching - me and (fellow student who was not a participant) were not dry eyed! It really did relay such a powerful message.

Jessica:

> I thought it was very good. I personally was quite moved by it, like a wave of emotion, almost tearful. I found it quite unsettling but enlightening to hear my words read back to me in a different voice. I could reflect on the meaning in a new light, maybe because I could hear it more objectively. I felt I had been quite open with you, yet within the group I have been very private during the three years. It felt quite strange that everyone was listening to my inner feelings and yet I felt safe because my identity had been protected. It was the first time that the group had listened to what I had to say.
>
> I loved the images used to reflect the words. Very powerful.

Linda:

> Thanks for sending me a copy of the story. Firstly it's great that you found a picture of the French boy with the original red balloon (fab) and then the many red balloons, which could represent individually my growth in knowledge or the other red balloons who have completed the course alongside me. The image of the cocoon I also liked as it represents change which all of us have done in our own ways (depending on our starting point). At the beginning of the course I thought I would see the world with very similar eyes but I don't think I do, yes it

is a personal milestone but also another starting point! There is so much more to learn.

Other aspects that I found represented my journey were; an acknowledgement of my foundational beliefs but the growth in confidence and conviction in expressing those beliefs and thus gaining an ability to challenge attitudes out with my professional and personal value bases but also an awareness that I will continue to change and can therefore listen to other views as these too are important. My inward change has brought about an outward change.

I interact (I hope) differently and see many different aspects of people now. (‘International placement’ may have some influence on this)

The challenging of friends or family who voice extreme or bigoted views is always difficult but rung true for me throughout my training (particularly in 2nd year) as my convictions became stronger and my knowledge deeper. This did contribute to up and downs in the course as did variations in academic confidence i.e. knowledge, understanding and application.

So, the impact of the SW training touched on personal, social aspects of my life but surely runs a little deeper and changed me cognitively as the story said the change is good.

Assad:

it is a true representation of my experience. It is brilliant to watch and listen to. Thank you.

Of particular interest to me was that in response to ‘what resonated for you?’ two of the participants commented on the digital story as a whole and two of the participants identified statements and images that they themselves had not contributed. Linda chose the cocoon and Vicky the feeling of being isolated. These had been expressed by others and yet had specifically resonated for them. This suggests the trustworthiness of the group profile in representing the unitary experience of the group.

Whilst all of the participants believed that the story represented their experience, for Linda and Jessica, it provided a catalyst for further reflection. As Jessica commented 'I could reflect on the meaning in a new light, maybe because I could hear it more objectively'. For her, the viewing of the digital story along with her cohort, led to further reflections regarding her experience as a private person but also due to it being the first time in her mind that the group had listened to what she had to say. The viewing of the story in the group was as much as a catalyst for further reflection and the analysis of her experience as was creating and viewing the digital story itself.

Linda also reflects further after watching the digital story for the first time. She chose to do this on her own rather than part of the end of year showing. During the workshop, she had talked about a film called the 'Red Balloon' which had significant meaning for her in recognising injustice. She hadn't been able to find all the images she wanted during the workshop day and so I had added to this when completing the digital story. This led to further analysis for her in how these images could be interpreted and what meaning they could have in relation to representing the experience of social work education. It was my interpretation and augmentation to her initial representation that had served as this catalyst, which in turn, fostered her own transformative learning.

I thought this was particularly interesting given my initial concerns, expressed in chapter five, regarding the creation of representations by someone other than the person themselves. My view was that it would be a closer representation if created by the person. This demonstrated to me however, that a collaborative process which incorporated mine and the participants' interpretations was effective in enabling the participants to express and analyse their experience more. The outcome was a closer representation, as providing my own interpretation had enabled the participants to reflect further.

Cowling (2004b) provides examples of this happening within his own research, when a participant disagrees or questions his interpretation or their previous expressions. One example, which I identified in part one, was when a participant did not agree that a piece of music chosen by Cowling represented her experience. As a result, she was able to offer further clarification and reflections on her experience. By doing this, the four types of knowledge being generated were further reflected on and used to inform each of the others (Heron 1996).

The process of participant validation within this study also led to further control and participation by those involved. The quality of the data and the content of the pattern profile were verified and the participants were able to retain control over the research process by discussing, commenting and suggesting alternatives to the methods used so far. Whilst the process was initiated by me, perhaps more than in traditional participatory approaches, as reflected on in chapter seven (ethical considerations), the degree of participation by those involved was decided by them and the participants reported feeling included, respected and valued during the process. I think the level of personal disclosure and engagement was demonstrative of this. The process achieved the desired outcomes of participatory research and whole person approaches to learning, such as participants feeling in control; seeking knowledge from people within the context being explored; enabling learning which leads to the development of the participants' insight as well as learning which leads to action (Stringer 2007). This is not to lose sight of the capacity of participatory approaches to silence participants as well as to empower (Fenge 2010) but that along with the mix of one to one and group activity, the balance appeared to be achieved. The resulting action is explored later when considering the usefulness of the research.

Interpreter bias

The research approach was also subject to interpreter bias (Holloway 1997; Smyth and Holian 2008; Creswell 2009; Holloway and Wheeler 2009), as is the case for any research where data collection is interpreted and analysed. Because the participants requested that I created the group representation (digital story) from the content they had generated, this was particularly so. Smyth and Holian (2008, p.37) argue that a researcher can never be truly objective arguing that "all observation is theory or value laden and dependent on past experience of the observer". They argue, however, that it is researchers without insider knowledge that should be subject to more scrutiny. Relationships between researchers and participants are fundamental to the process of UAI where interactivity is seen as "a powerful force which can be used to benefit the research enterprise" (Cowling 2001, p.46). Both participants and researcher are involved in analysing, interpreting and presenting the findings. Smyth and Holian (2008, p.37) suggest that insider researchers can offer a unique perspective because of their "knowledge of the history and culture of the people and institutions involved". It is the depth, insight, knowledge, learning and contribution to shared knowledge that

validates the research. All interpretations of the research findings within this thesis acknowledge that this can only ever be an interpretation and is transparent in recognising and acknowledging what the impact of interpreter bias has or may have been.

Documentation produced during the course of a UAI such as précis, reflective notes and representations are suggested as methods to attempt to identify if interpreter bias is having a negative impact on the research process (Cowling 2001). As explored in chapter seven (ethical considerations), power constructs may have negatively affected the experience for the participants and my ability to generate accurate and trustworthy data. This has been acknowledged, explored and reflected upon throughout this thesis, as have the use of strategies to minimise this impact.

My view is, that at times interpreter bias did negatively affect the research process. Participants are likely to have made assumptions about my view points or beliefs and chosen what to share and not to share. There may well have been an element of wanting to please me or to share what they felt I would want to hear, due to my status as a lecturer and their experience of me as their assessor. This was not as much as I had anticipated. Participants shared many details of their experiences, backgrounds and beliefs in what I perceived to be a very open and honest way. Whilst their choices of what to share may well have been influenced by the nature of the study and their familiarity with me, the content of what they shared, I do think, was trustworthy and added to the insight we can gain into the experience of social work education.

What I have realised, is that in seeking participant validation, I asked questions such as 'does this represent your experience?' Whilst this could have elicited a yes or no response, on reflection, I have considered whether this should have been worded differently. Asking 'what aspects do not represent your experience?' for example, could have elicited a more detailed response and enabled fine tuning of the group representation. I think the way the question was worded made it more likely that participants focussed on the aspects that were meaningful for them. This is in part however due to the appreciative approach being used. 'What resonates for you?' is typical of appreciative approaches which seek to identify what works (Cooperrider and Srivastva 1987). I have provided further reflection on the use of appreciative questions later in this chapter when discussing triangulation.

External audit and peer review

External audit (Creswell 2009) and peer review was achieved in the earlier stages of the research process, through submission at transfer stage and for internal ethical review, along with discussions within individual and group doctoral supervision and with the participants themselves. Following the data collection stage, this was also achieved through publication of journal articles relating to the research (Hughes 2011a, 2011b) and conference workshops. The digital story was also shared with the participants' cohort and with subsequent year groups to facilitate their own critical reflection. Feedback was sought from all of these groups with a number of students, at different stages of their social work education, identifying what resonated for them.

Findings were shared within educational settings such as lectures with students, practice educator forums and conferences where comments, feedback, opinions and reactions were sought and reflected upon and incorporated into the final discussions (chapters ten, eleven and twelve). These have all informed the development of propositional statements and the practice development component of this Doctorate in Professional Practice and are incorporated into part three of this thesis. Opinions and reflections on the implications of the research data and findings for developing educational practice are incorporated into the following chapter.

Thick description

Another method of verifying the data was thick description (Creswell 1998 cited in Frankel 1999). This forms part of the documentation presented as part of the unitary appreciative profile and the critical reflections within the personal narrative throughout this thesis. I have included detailed descriptions of the context, how participants were identified, initial relationships, how that relationship changed; general information and characteristics of the participants such as age, gender and relevant prior experience (Gilchrist and Williams 1999), as well as detailed descriptions of my own identity, role, relationships and prior experience in order to demonstrate my own standpoint and influence.

Due to the whole person approach taken within this thesis, in relation to the research study and the underpinning values and approaches to education, I also sought for these descriptions to incorporate aspects of the person other than social worker or student.

These are incorporated into each person's story within chapter eight (presentation of findings). Profiles seek to give a 'sense of the person' as suggested by Heron (1996) in generating experiential knowledge. I was mindful of Rushing's (2008) suggestion, mentioned in chapter five, that reality can be perceived from a wider perspective when aspects of a person's experience are explored, that others may have considered disparate, dissimilar or unrelated. The first question I asked all of the participants within their individual interview was "tell me something about yourself that I wouldn't know or expect about you". The aim was to reinforce the whole person approach to the interview as well as to act as an ice-breaker. I wanted to give licence to the participants to share aspects of themselves other than their student or social work self. Whilst the aspects the participants shared were varied, they all proved relevant to their experience of social work education and enabled them to provide a wider perspective than perhaps would otherwise have been gained.

Linda for example, reflected on how important music was to her and how she would love to study music professionally. This led her to reflect on the significance of music for her during her social work education and to choose music as her 'item' to represent her experience within the workshop. Jessica explained that she had already studied for a degree prior to social work. Whilst she felt that she had not used this learning, this led her to reflect on how different the two experiences had been and the impact of this on her expectations and her actual experience this time round. Terry shared personal experiences of domestic violence as a child from his mother to his father. This led him to reflect in the interview on how this had shaped his view of the world and his views of justice and injustice. Assad explained that he spoke and wrote four languages fluently. He reflected later on his multiculturalism and the influence of his race, culture and religion on his views and values. Finally, Vicky shared her love of motorbike racing. She loved that this was unexpected and led her to reflect on her identity and how this had changed during her social work education. Reflections included her awareness of being female and expectations of women by others. This led her to reflect on her awareness of feminism and what this meant for her.

All of this detail added to the thick description of the participants in chapter eight (presentation of findings) and the research process outlined in chapter six (method). I believe it significantly added to the quality and trustworthiness of the research findings in the way that it sought a closer representation of the whole person. As an ice-breaker,

it also fostered the relationship between me as the researcher and the participants in the way it built rapport and encouraged openness. It demonstrated my interest in them and their experience and seemed to elicit thoughtful, honest and explicit responses.

More detailed descriptions could perhaps have been gained had I arranged to access information such as student records. I chose not to do this as I wanted the information to be generated firsthand by the participants. This did involve relying on what participants chose to share and there were times when I was interested in other information, in particular when compiling each person's profile, such as age or cultural background. I considered whether I should have requested this information during or prior to the interviews. My response was to go back to the participants and ask them for a description of how they would identify themselves. This is congruent with the UAI principle of ensuring that the primary voice is that of the participants. It was an enlightening process as they all described themselves in a way I would not have. All in a way I perceived as accurate and as I saw them, but far richer than had I accessed their student records for more mundane descriptions that perhaps would only have captured their student selves. This, along with their interviews, personal representations and thought maps including 'what makes you, you?' provided a range of rich data and thick description from their own perspectives. My own perspective is captured when discussing my interpretation of the findings in chapter ten.

Triangulation

The fifth method of verifying the data and achieving credibility and trustworthiness of the findings within this study (in addition to reflexivity (Cowling 2004a; Elliot 2005), member checking, external audit and thick description (Holloway 1997; Creswell 1998 cited in Frankel 1999; Gilchrist and Williams 1999; Creswell 2009), is that of triangulation (Holloway 1997). This was achieved using multiple methods of gathering data such as interviews, group work and visual, verbal and written expressions. Multiple methods of analysing the data were used such as critically reflective verbal and written analyses and précis, from which to identify emerging themes; and visual representations. Whilst the focus of the inquiry was on the experience of five participants, interpretation of these findings drew on multiple data sources (five participants; social work cohorts, staff team; and practice and University educators from a range of disciplines accessed through conferences and workshops);

A range of methods were used to seek as close a representation of the participants' experience as possible, in the form of the unitary appreciative profile (as presented in chapter eight). Feedback identified earlier in this chapter and given verbally by the participants was overwhelmingly positive in its achievement in capturing their experience. Social work educators and other students also commented on the meaning and significance for them. Whilst there have been a range of responses and different interpretations, everyone offering feedback has identified aspects of the findings that resonate for them or that have enabled them to reflect further. A common response within conference settings with practice educators and lecturers in social work is that it has reminded them what the impact of social work education was for them and enabled them to reflect more deeply on what the experience might be like for students they are working with now.

I am mindful that in using an appreciative approach and again asking 'what resonates for you', this would always generate responses regarding what worked. From my own development there were times when I would have found it useful to ascertain what did not resonate or what had not worked. Over time, my view on this changed as I recognised its basis in a need to prove that the findings were 'right'. As a qualitative and participatory research process however, this was not the aim. My intention was not to create a representation of what was true for everyone engaged in social work education. I sought to gain insight into five unique experiences. Presenting these experiences to others provided a catalyst for them to reflect and make their own meaning. As with presenting the findings back to the participants, reflection and meaning making may emerge from aspects of the study that do not resonate. In terms of quality and trustworthiness, the representation achieved this outcome. Insight was provided into what the experience had been like for the participants and provided a useful perspective from which others could reflect on their own experiences and the implications for their own practice.

Consideration of usefulness

A final consideration of the appropriateness and legitimacy of the research is that of usefulness. Cowling (2001, p.46) identifies two aspects of UAI in achieving this: the desire to seek rich descriptions which can be transferred to other contexts and the "ability to make a positive difference to the lives of the participants". The potential for UAI to achieve this has been argued within chapter five. Previous discussions regarding

triangulation have demonstrated its usefulness as a catalyst for fostering critical reflection for a range of people on the experience of social work education or indeed, other professional education.

The participants themselves identified the usefulness of the research inquiry in a number of ways, including facilitating the process of ending; recognising their achievements and how far they had come; and recognising and articulating the impact that social work education has had on their lives. One of the participants said they had not reflected on the whole experience in this way before, only on aspects of their learning. For all, it appeared to facilitate a process of conscious-raising as advocated by Freire (1993, 2000, 2004). Posing questions such as "has social work education affected your beliefs and values? what impact has this had on your life? and what can we learn from your experience?" was useful in triggering a process of critical reflection and self evaluation. This demonstrated its usefulness as both a research tool in gaining rich detail and insight but also as an educative tool in fostering critical reflection and expression. A true test of its usefulness for my own practice and wider afield, has been in the resulting practice development. This is explained and explored within part three of this thesis.

Conclusion

In chapter nine, I have sought to identify and explore the quality and trustworthiness of the research findings. I have reflected on the dilemmas and questions which emerged for me during the research process and my responses to these. These included my openness to the potential flaws of the research process and my reflections on my own methods of conducting the research inquiry. A number of strategies were used to improve the quality of the research findings including reflexivity, member checking, external audit, thick description, triangulation and consideration of usefulness. I acknowledge that research will always be subject to interpreter bias based on the experience and values of the researcher conducting and writing up the inquiry. UAI acknowledges that findings will be interpreted by all of those viewing them and made sense of within the context of their own lives. This also resonates with the underpinning whole person approaches to education explored in chapters two and three. Chapter ten therefore, explores my own interpretation of the findings within the context of social work education and my own practice as an educator.

Chapter 10: My interpretation of the findings

The aim of chapter ten is to present my own interpretation of the findings using a reflective approach to analysing the data. I have sought to find meaning for me; to identify emerging patterns which represent the experience of social work education for the participants and to develop propositional knowing from the research findings which can be applied to more global situations.

Interpretation of data

My understanding and interpretation of the findings has involved becoming familiar with all of the data collected to create the unitary appreciative profile. This involved many readings of the written documentations, listening to the audio recorded interviews and multiple viewings of the digital story and visual representations. Initially, this was with the aim of gaining a sense of each person and their experience and to gain an intuitive grasp of the participants' expressions (Heron 1996); as was the first aim of the inquiry. It also involved reading, listening and viewing data with a particular purpose. I reviwed the five specific questions identified at the end of chapter one, in order to consider what the findings could contribute to this debate. Thirdly, I engaged with the findings by considering the implications of the insight gained for social work education. As I have presented the research findings to others, I observed their reactions and reflected on their questions, comments and the resonance for them. My learning has informed the development of my practice in this field and has been used to inform the development of models of teaching, learning and assessment which was the second aim of this inquiry. As a result, a second loop of data was created from which to reflect on the original findings. These are explored within part three of this thesis in the practice development component of this Doctorate in Professional Practice.

The aim of a UAI is not to reduce the information generated into component parts. It is to capture the essence of an experience (Cowling 2001), when viewed as a whole and to consider the significance of the findings in generating new knowledge and insight. UAI involves creating a living portrait (Talley et al 2005); or an illustration which captures the essence of an experience (Alligood 2008). Whilst unique to those sharing their experience, their expressions can be used to inform our understanding of a particular context (Cowling 2001); in this case, the experience of social work education. My interpretation of the findings draws on representations and reflections to capture this

essence and to acknowledge the fluidity and subjectivity of the findings which are ever changing and evolving.

The questions identified at the end of chapter one were:

1. Can a person's core values change?
2. Are there ethical implications for seeking to change a person's core values?
3. Can a change in values be taught?
4. Is there an impact on the person themselves if their beliefs, values and behaviour are subject to scrutiny and change during this process?
5. Are there models for fostering this development and change in a way that acknowledges this impact?

Can a person's core values change?

When reviewing the literature in relation to educational theory, in particular TLT (Mezirow 1996, 1997, 2000, 2003), I concluded that it was possible for a person's core beliefs and values to evolve and to change. I identified educational theory which recognised the role of the person themselves and the need for the change to be purposeful for them (Rogers 1983; Knowles 1990; Mezirow 1996; Freire 2000; Von Kotze and Cooper 2000; Cranton 2002; Phillips et al 2002; Davis-Manigaulte et al 2006; Pearson and Somekh 2006; Rush 2008; Bernhardt 2009; Walton 2010). Literature suggests that for transformative learning to occur, the person needs to be open to the views of others and open to change. Freire (1993), comments on the false identity that emerges if the person only changes their persona rather than their actual beliefs and values. In relation to social work education, if the values of the profession are imposed on the learner, this will not lead to a change in the person's core values. Developing professional values is a key aim of social work education and can be an outcome if the learner seeks to question their values, beliefs and behaviour and the premise on which these are based. This process can be precipitated by the actions of others such as social work educators or by other external events or people which create a catalyst or a disorientating dilemma (Mezirow 2003; O'Sullivan and Taylor 2004). A change in values to ones which align with those of the social work profession can be achieved through critical reflection, discernment or assimilation.

In relation to the research inquiry, there is evidence of a shift in values as a result of the participants' social work education. All of the participants had experienced perspective transformation or a change to their frame of reference, to one which was "more inclusive, differentiating, permeable (open to other view points), critically reflective of assumptions, emotionally capable of change and integrative of experience" (Mezirow 2000, p.19). As O'Sullivan and Taylor (2004) would suggest, the process was far broader than their learning on the degree programme. Learning was influenced by a whole range of experiences. Whilst only some of the participants considered there to have been fundamental changes to their values, all of the participants reported processes similar to that described by Scott (1997) where values were clarified and reinforced by their new knowledge.

Jessica, for example, explained that her views and values remained the same but that she now had more knowledge to support her views. Linda described being more open to the views of others and more reflective in her thinking. Participants felt that little change occurred to their core values when they were already aligned with those of the profession. Values became more refined and evidenced based rather than different. All participants reported that they saw the world differently. As Linda said, "At the beginning of the course I thought I would see the world with very similar eyes but I don't think I do".

As well as reinforcement and consolidation of core values, Vicky, Terry and Assad expressed fundamental changes. Vicky explained how knowledge gained from her degree regarding politics and social exclusion had enabled her to recognise how people experience society differently. She spoke specifically of gender and women's roles and her new knowledge of how "women miss out in so many ways". This knowledge led to a change in her values. Vicky started to question other people's roles in society such as young carers and whether their caring role limited their education and life opportunities. As documented in transformative learning theory literature (Mezirow 1996, 1997, 2003, Taylor 1997; 2001, 2006, 2007, 2008, O'Sullivan 2003; Cranton 2006), she came to view the world differently. She experienced changes in beliefs but also an increased sense of responsibility to be politically aware and to ask questions. This was a fundamental shift from her initial view that politics were not important and had no relevance to her life.

Vicky's values became shaped by a collective responsibility and her awareness of the needs of others (Freire 1993, 200, 2004, 2005; Inglis 1998; Lee and Green 2003 and Merriam and Kim 2008). She recognised that prior to university, she had not been consciously aware of what she now perceives as injustice and inequality in the world. Her starting point resonates with Mezirow's (2000) explanation of people mindlessly assimilating to societal norms. It was her social work education and subsequent learning that created a disorientating dilemma and a catalyst from which to question and challenge these assumptions. This led to what Freire (1993) would describe as conscientization.

Terry also talked of changes to his core values. One example was in relation to racism. Whilst demonstrating a strong sense of social justice since his childhood (as expressed in Terry's story; his thought map and the digital story), Terry developed what he described as a "whole raft of knowledge about anti-racism" during his social work degree. This knowledge enabled him to question his own beliefs and values as a white man regarding race and to recognise that his behaviour in the past had been racist. At the time, he had viewed this as inoffensive banter but now described feelings of guilt and shame. He wanted to go back and say sorry to his black friends. Applying this process to a range of areas, Terry also gave the example of how his view of older people had changed significantly and how this had in turn affected his relationship with his father.

Viewing the old, through the lens of the new, is an aspect which forms part of Mezirow's view of TLT. It demonstrates a shift in values and beliefs as the person is able to reassess old behaviour based on their new beliefs. The desire to go back and change previous actions was a common one amongst the participants, which seemed to evidence their increased awareness as their new knowledge led them to reinterpret the meaning they had attached to previous experiences and events, including those in their personal lives.

Assad perhaps described the most fundamental changes in beliefs, due to the conflict between his emerging professional beliefs and values and those of his own culture and religion. Whilst other participants recognised that they had mindlessly assimilated to their cultural norms, they had been open to concepts of recognising and challenging injustice, inequality and discrimination. Their values had changed or evolved as a result

of opening their eyes to knowledge which enabled them to refine their views or as Linda said, recognise when they had not been as open as they had thought they were.

For Assad, knowledge gained within his social work education was often in direct conflict with his cultural and or religious beliefs and values. He gave examples of how homosexuality and abortion were viewed as wrong in his culture and that it was expected that women should have different roles within society. This contradicted his emerging social work values which were to view people as unique, their own best expert and to challenge discrimination, stigma and oppression (Skills for Care 2002; Codes of Practice 2002, SWRB 2010). These were values based on respecting others that Assad spoke passionately about and which informed his current practice with people who were homeless, as evidenced in his story.

Assad expressed a very difficult process of aligning the two belief systems in a way that was true to both his religion and to his emerging identity as a social worker. He was critical of a social work friend who was Muslim and who refused to take on certain cases based on the above beliefs; saying "I told him he was in the wrong profession". Assad wanted to align the two belief systems. He made a distinction between his cultural beliefs and religious beliefs. He felt able to question and distance himself from his cultural beliefs which he was keen to re-interpret based on his new knowledge such as beliefs regarding mental health which he explained was seen as a curse in his culture. Assad described drawing on his religious beliefs however as "a standard tool" from which to guide his life. He sought to find commonalities between his Islamic and professional social work beliefs such as respect for others; contributing to society and a view that if you do good things, good things happen to you, as a means to this alignment.

Conflict between professional social work values and personal, religious and cultural ones, did create a dilemma for me. I questioned whether as an educator I should encourage a person to challenge their cultural views or whether this contradicted the very values being promoted such as respect for others and a right to choice. Given the aim of transformative learning to lead to an increased openness to the views of others (Mezirow 2003), I questioned whether educators, such as me, should be more open to Assad's cultural and religious views rather than seeking to change them. Some of Assad's struggles resulted from challenging his core cultural and religious values and

beliefs, which were part of his whole self, his identity and his relationship with the world. The discomfort I felt, created a disorientating dilemma (Mezirow 2003), from which to reflect on the role of social work education in seeking this change. Whether there are ethical implications of seeking to change a person's core values, was the second question which emerged from chapter one. The findings provided insight to inform consideration of this question.

Are there ethical implications for seeking to change a person's core values?
Participants identified a range of ways that their social work education had affected their values, their beliefs and their behaviour. This had implications for their relationships with others; how they saw and interacted with the world around them and their sense of emotional well-being.

The conclusion I drew, when considering this question in part one, was that social work education should enable students to question and reflect on their beliefs and values and consider how and to what extent their values and beliefs inform the decisions they make in practice. The aim is to develop the more open and permeable view to which Mezirow refers and ultimately to better and fairer outcomes for those in receipt of social work services. My view expressed in part one, based on the educational literature, was that this should be approached with caution. Any change should come from the person themselves, as imposing values and behaviours on a person would be oppressive (Freire 1993) but also ineffectual (Elias 1997; Inglis 1998).

The need to scrutinise and question the premise on which beliefs and values are based (Mezirow 1996) was shared by the participants who all expressed the belief that the change had been a positive one and had formed part of their personal and professional development. Whilst identifying their social work education as enabling them to acquire the knowledge to question their views or to gain insight, none of them expressed the view that values had been imposed. Participants viewed the changes and consolidation of their values and beliefs as the result of their process of questioning and reflecting on knowledge and experience gained. They used phrases such as "I reflect more"; "I question everything"; "I am able to challenge", "I see oppression everywhere now". This confirms the potential outcome of social work education as enabling learners to think for themselves and to develop autonomous thought, as explored in chapter one (SWTF 2009; Munro 2011).

In response to the question of whether there are ethical implications of social work education seeking to change a person's core values, the experience of the participants in this study demonstrates that there clearly are. My view, as informed by this research inquiry and the literature, is still that whilst advantageous, as it leads to increased openness to the views of others, this should be approached with caution. Changes should be within the control of the learner as they seek to question and reflect on their own beliefs and values. Educators must recognise the personal and unique ways in which learners engage in this process. The research inquiry demonstrated how such changes affected the participants' views and the conflict that this created for some in their lives. Consideration of this impact is explored later in this chapter. How this change occurred for the participants and how it can inform the debate on whether values can be taught (the third question at the end of chapter one) is explored next.

Can a change in values be taught?

When exploring the literature, I concluded that values cannot be taught but that a process should be facilitated to enable individuals to reflect and question their own values and the impact of these on their own behaviour and on the lives of people who use social work services. The perception of the participants was that changes to their beliefs, values and behaviour were as a direct result of the knowledge they gained during their social work education and the way they were taught to see the world differently. They did not report being taught what values to have or told what to think. Social work education taught them how to think differently. They were encouraged to question their values and their beliefs and reflect on what basis these were formed and what impact they had on their practice or their views. A combination of lectures, practice learning opportunities, formal supervision, self managed study and shared learning along with personal experiences, enabled the participants to do this in a way that was meaningful for them.

Mezirow's ten phases of transformative learning

Applying Mezirow's ten stages of TLT (2003) is a useful process in considering how transformation of values, beliefs and behaviour happened for the participants in this inquiry. My interpretation, based on the findings, is that transformative learning occurred for all of the participants as a result of their social work education but in the context of learning from all aspects of their lives. This is based on a number of factors

expressed by the participants that reflect the various processes of transformative learning as discussed in chapter three. Participants talked of:

- questioning their own beliefs
- reflecting on where these beliefs had come from
- questioning and looking back at old behaviours
- identifying resulting changes to their behaviour and practice
- making adjustments to their life.

Interestingly, given the debate and critique of the linear structure of Mezirow's model (Cranton 2002; Merriam and Ntseane 2008; Merriam and Kim 2008; Walton 2010), I cannot ascertain whether it happened for the participants in this way or in this order or how conscious a process it was. Participants certainly gave examples of disorientating dilemmas which resulted in a change of mindset and behaviour. Cranton's (2002) view, as suggested in chapter three, was that whilst not necessarily as structured as Mezirow's ten stages, transformative learning starts with a disorientating dilemma and results in equilibrium being restored. Based on the experiences of these participants, this appears to dismiss the extent of disorientation experienced. Equilibrium being restored appears to imply a neat end point to the process of transformative learning, a sense of completion or stability. Whilst the participants had made adjustments to their lives based on their transformative learning, there appeared to be a feeling that the process of transformation was open-ended.

The lack of equilibrium may reflect the stage the participants were at in that the transformation was not complete. I would argue on the basis of this study, that the process of transformative learning cannot be defined as a distinct, self contained process of learning with a clear beginning and end. Rogers (1983) argues, with the pursuit of personal development, that the ultimate goal is one that is sought after but can never realistically be achieved. I suspect that Walton's (2010) model which equates transformative learning to other types of personal development and views the transformation as contextual and multi-dimensional, more effectively captures this process. Each of the participants drew on a whole range of catalysts and disorientating dilemmas which led to their ongoing learning, reflection and development. Each one of these informed and built on earlier learning and contributed to the multi-dimensional, spiral process of learning.

Whole person approach

A key finding for this study is that for the participants, the learning process transcended context. In my experience, social work education literature often implies a linear or cyclical process of relating theory to practice or practice experience informing a student's understanding of theory. In approaching the participants' experience from a whole person perspective, it was evident that the participants in this study were using their whole selves and their experiences as a resource for their learning. As identified in O'Sullivan's ecological or planetary model of transformative learning (O'Sullivan and Taylor 2004, p.21), knowledge was generated "from the practice of living". It was not restricted to the acquisition of knowledge within the classroom. Participants did not make a distinction between different areas of learning such as reading, lectures or practice. Their use of self and a process of seeking to understand the world around them by drawing on a wider range of influences appeared to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Vicky's learning regarding domestic violence for example, as expressed in her story, was informed by her own experience of it; her social work practice with a woman fleeing domestic abuse; a placement in a mother and baby unit; lectures on politics and ideology, her mother's views and values as a social worker and her own emerging social work values and political views in relation to women's roles within society. Learning had not resulted from one disorientating dilemma but an ongoing process of making sense of her experiences and her beliefs and questioning the premise on which these were based, when faced with many disorientating dilemmas or catalysts. Vicky's learning had not only affected her social work practice but the way she viewed the world and lived her life personally. Use of self in this way, encapsulates the principles of whole person approaches to learning and the unitary approach of this inquiry. Different experiences and their influence on each other cannot be reduced to divisible parts but can only be understood as part of the whole experience of learning and transformation in the context of the participants' lives.

Each of the participants expressed how their learning, knowledge and insight gained within their social work education had affected how they lived their lives. Ways that their learning transcended context were particularly well expressed within the 'what makes you, you' thought maps **(figures 3-7).** Participants refer to using their knowledge to understand their family, their friends, their own lives or situations. Linda identified

how her knowledge of theories helped her to understand the dynamics of her family. Assad used his knowledge of human development to recognise how his religion had shaped his life. Jessica became more aware that the family support and network that she relied on did not exist for everyone, enabling her to appreciate her own situation more and to explore and appreciate other types of support.

The research inquiry showed that the process of learning came from the learner's ability to reflect on their experiences and to make meaning in relation to their own beliefs, values and behaviour and their own lives. The impact of reflexivity on a person's life has significant implications for ongoing professional and personal development throughout a social worker's career. Without adequate reflection and the support of supervision and post qualifying study, a social worker's ongoing learning and development might only be informed by their practice and personal experience. On its own, this may lead to the development of assimilated beliefs due to unquestioned ways of viewing the world. In turn, this could lead to poorer outcomes for people who use social work services as the social worker's practice could fail to develop and evolve or adapt to change.

Kaleidoscope model of transformative learning

Rather than a linear process of transformative learning, my own interpretation and visual representation is of a kaleidoscopic process of learning. Martha Rogers uses this metaphor to describe the process of change

> As the kaleidoscope is rotated, there is constant change, continuous variation in form, revealing new, creative and innovative manifestations of the evolving pattern' (Rogers 1980, p.401 cited in Tally et al 2005, p.28)

This metaphor for change can also represent the experience of transformation and of learning described by the participants. A kaleidoscope is defined as "a constantly changing pattern or sequence of elements" (Oxford Dictionaries 2011); "any complex pattern of frequently changing shapes and colours" or "a complicated set of circumstances" (Collins English Dictionary 2009). Kaleidoscopic images are an endless variety of shapes and patterns created as a result of reflection. As a metaphor, it recognises the ever changing nature of knowing, learning and practice in relation to social work. Emerging patterns are created as a result of viewing the reflections of many

changing images and influences. From this, new patterns and ways of seeing emerge which too are ever changing and evolving.

The kaleidoscope model provides a useful metaphor or representation of the complex process of learning and reflection for the participants, which a linear or cyclical model fails to capture. The process of change informed and affected all aspects of the participants' lives and their emerging sense of self. This resulted in changes to their beliefs, values and behaviour which will continue to evolve and transform. Social workers will continue to be influenced by a whole range of experiences in their personal and professional lives, long after their qualifying social work education. A kaleidoscope model of learning acknowledges this range of influences and the ever-changing context of social work practice. It can help learners to recognise the evolving nature of knowing and accept that there are no fixed or right answers.

Does this relate to all social work students?

I do wonder if less reflective students would view their social work education and their learning as a holistic process which affects and is informed by their lives outside of the classroom. Some students may well feel that they are being taught what to think. In part, this could be due to their own values and beliefs regarding the role of educators to teach and their own quest to find the right answer (Cranton 2002; Lin and Cranton 2005; Grise-Owens et al 2010; Walton 2010). Current views regarding disability, mental health or immigration, for example, may be perceived as fact. Social work values based on acceptance and unconditional positive regard do not reflect universal beliefs as Assad's story demonstrated. Social work educators should factor in the complexities of views and knowledge in these areas, including from people with first-hand experience, so as to enable students to form their own views and grapple with the broad, contradictory and complex nature of knowledge. Recognising complexity, would facilitate the development of critical thinking but may also enable social work students to manage the dissonance they sometimes experience when seeking to use their knowledge and values to inform their practice.

Whilst as educators we may problem pose and encourage debate and reflection in lectures and encourage learners to draw their own conclusions, some less reflective or self-aware students may struggle to develop their own views and may be more influenced by the views of others. This is perhaps more likely to result in developing a

false persona as suggested by Freire (1993) rather than actual transformative learning resulting from questioning their own views, values and behaviour. Whilst I have advocated throughout this thesis, the need for learners to reflect on their own values and draw their own conclusions, I am also aware of the assessment criteria within social work and other professional education for students to demonstrate their ability to practice in accordance with the values of the profession, the National Occupational Standards and the codes of conduct (TOPSS 2002). If I were marking an assignment for example, I would express concern if there were a lack of social work values demonstrated or a limited ability to reflect openly on any assumptions made. Requirements to meet the occupational standards and the underpinning values are likely to pressure some students into writing what they believe is expected, rather than what they actually believe.

Enabling learners to think for themselves has particular implications for social work education in terms of curricular. Transformative learning happened for the participants in this inquiry because of their curiosity and their ability to question, reflect and analyse their experiences and the knowledge and insight gained in all aspects of their lives. Developing an identity, which includes the role of social worker, rather than purely learning how to do social work, demonstrates the participants' approach to social work education. Personal as well as professional growth in this way resonates with the goal of Carl Rogers' (1983) humanist theory of self actualisation, explored in chapter two.

Insight into the process of learning for the participants leads me to conclude that emphasis within social work education should be on supporting the development of the person as well as the development of their knowledge base. In addition to presenting and sharing information such as on models of intervention, legislation and policy to develop technical expertise, teaching input should aim to foster critical thinking, reflection and curiosity through problem posing, debate, discourse, providing disorientating dilemmas and generating different types of knowing.

To some extent this is captured within the National Occupational Standards for Social Work (TOPSS 2002) and the proposed Professional Capabilities Framework (appendix one) which is set to replace them (SWRB 2010). Fostering reflection and critical thinking is commonplace within social work education, as demonstrated by the experiences of the participants in this study and the literature within chapter one

regarding a shift to a reflexive paradigm. Literature explored in chapter one, suggests that a number of students struggle with this skill (Mackay and Woodward 2010). This inquiry identifies the significant learning and development that can be achieved if students are competent in the skills of analysis and critical reflection and able to question all aspects of their lives, not just in relation to their social work education and practice. Gaining insight into how learning was achieved for the participants provides a basis from which to explore models of facilitating this in others. Strategies for achieving transformative learning which involves this whole person approach are explored in part three.

Students need to be supported however to develop both personally and professionally and to engage in what Mezirow (2003) describes as communicable knowledge; where learners seek to understand their experiences and the world around them. Acquisition of knowledge and the learner's understanding is influenced by their experience and their cultural and social norms. Facilitation of learning should seek to support the learner to both recognise and make sense of this complexity. Participants in this study, identified that educators should seek to do this in a way that acknowledges the impact of such processes and transformation on a person and their lives.

Is there an impact on the person themselves if their beliefs, values and behaviour are subject to scrutiny and change during this process?

This was the fourth question raised at the end of chapter one when considering the current social work education context. It is also the first aim of this research inquiry. My review of the literature on transformative learning and of social work education provided little insight into this impact, despite much anecdotal evidence from students, lecturers and practice educators that social work education can be life changing. Evidence was found in this inquiry of a significant impact of social work education on a person's beliefs, values and behaviour which in turn affected the students' lives as a whole. Experiences captured within the digital story, resonated for other members of the participants' cohort and two subsequent year groups who have used it as a catalyst to reflect on their own experience of social work education and the impact this has had for them. Whilst there are many unique experiences, the consensus is of a significant impact on their lives.

Emerging themes

There are three themes or patterns emerging from the inquiry and from sharing the digital story with others, which capture the essence of social work education and its impact on the whole person and their beliefs, values and behaviour. These are:

- the impact on how the participants viewed the world in terms of their understanding of injustice, discrimination and oppression
- the impact of their transformative learning on their relationships with others
- the impact of their social work education on their sense of well-being.

Impact on how the participants viewed the world in terms of their understanding of injustice, discrimination and oppression

This was a strong pattern emerging from all five individual profiles. Recognising and challenging injustice, discrimination and oppression is fundamental to social work practice and is clearly identified in the National Occupational Standards for Social work (TOPSS 2002), Codes of Practice; the proposed Professional Capabilities Framework (SWRB 2010) and the international definition of social work (International Association of Schools of Social Work and International Federation of Social Workers 2001). All of the participants identified this as a reason for seeking a career in social work and were able to identify why they thought this was so important to them. They all identified times in their childhood where they felt they had demonstrated a keen sense of injustice that perhaps went beyond those around them. Jessica and Vicky viewed this as fundamental parts of their character "I've always been like that". Assad, Terry and Linda identified experiences of injustice in their lives and a desire to challenge and respond to this. As Terry said in his interview and the digital story, "you want to challenge injustice and inequality and I always take this back to what I perceived as this real unfairness when I was a kid".

Participants identified their social work education as having had a profound impact on how they viewed the world. In part this was due to the knowledge they had gained through wider reading, lectures, discussions and practice learning regarding different people's experiences particularly of injustice, discrimination and oppression including structural oppression "It opened my eyes"; "I hadn't realised the extent". They all provided examples of becoming more aware. This was also as a result of their curiosity; of learning to question everything and to consider the causes and impact of a person's experience. As Assad explained, "I have changed. The way I see people; the way I treat

people; the way I think about stuff. I reflect more. I question, I question my own judgments much more than I used to, 'why did I do that? Was that necessary?" As Terry reflected, "I think I see the world through a different set of eyes now. You see oppression everywhere".

The observation I made was that the participants were no longer engaged in mindless assimilation but had achieved a heightened cognitive awareness of the world around them. This is often identified as one of the desired outcomes of transformative learning (Mezirow 2000; Merriam 2004). Participants were particularly tuned in to recognising oppression and discrimination but also demonstrated a commitment to doing something about it. They embraced the social action strand of social work (International Association of Schools of Social Work/ International Federation of Social Workers Definition of Social Work 2001; Lymbery 2005), as described in chapter one. The participants all reflected on the difficulties of knowing how to achieve this in practice and the need to find their own path. As Jessica said, "I'm now more confident but I would do it in my style". Terry reflected on his learning from reflection: "It's made me think about my role as a male worker, going out to do an assessment with this lady. It wasn't until after that I thought I didn't even ask: 'do you want to be interviewed by a male?'" Linda concluded that "If I have to be working in that really structured, local authority, powerful environment, then it's about how I work with that person".

For the participants, their learning regarding oppression led to an increased socio-political awareness. An increased sense of social responsibility emerged for Vicky as already mentioned. For Linda who described her family and upbringing as very political, her education had reinforced her socialist views but also enabled her to become more tolerant of those with views other than her own. The participants reflected on how they now challenge more. As Assad said "you learn to speak up". All five participants expressed this view; identifying a change in them that not only did they recognise oppression and injustice; they felt compelled to challenge it. It was evident however that for all of the participants, this had an impact on other aspects of their lives.

Impact on their sense of emotional wellbeing

As discussed, all of the participants had experienced perspective transformation or a change to their frame of reference (Mezirow 2000). Transformative learning impacted positively on their sense of emotional well-being. They expressed feelings of

confidence, self belief, satisfaction and a feeling that their beliefs and behaviours were fair and just. The many examples of challenging injustice and oppression gave them a sense of satisfaction. They also described a sense of achievement, gained through academic and professional success on being close to completion of a degree and a professional qualification, which had led to increased self esteem.

The process of transition; of becoming more aware, critically reflective of assumptions and open to other viewpoints, had led to experiences and outcomes that negatively affected their sense of well-being and quality of life. Participants described feelings of guilt, shame, frustration, anxiety; of losing a sense of belonging and identity; difficult family relationships; losing friendships and experiencing stressful situations. This was represented most strongly by the participants when expressing changes to their values and outlook and the impact on relationships with friends and family.

Relationships with others

Shifts in their outlook, beliefs, values and behaviour had an impact for all of the participants on their relationships with others. They identified their relationships with friends or family as important to their sense of self and to their well-being and as a source of stability, support and identity. This was clearly evidenced within their thought maps (figures 3-7). All experienced changes to these relationships as a direct result of their social work education resulting in conflict, instability, disruption to social support networks and to their sense of identity and belonging. This in turn impacted on their sense of stability and feelings of security which are important conditions for transformative learning as explored in chapter three.

In challenging oppression and discrimination, Terry commented in his story and the digital story that “People send you jokes and stuff and I had to say to my nephew last week, that’s just bang out of order that is. Send me something funny, not that crap”. All of the participants talked of challenging friends, family and colleagues regarding what they felt to be discriminatory or oppressive comments. For Jessica with strong family support, this was accepted and she felt that her family had been open to the challenges and showed a willingness to “get it right”. For Assad and Vicky, this had lost them friendships, in part due to their shifting values that meant they no longer wanted to spend time with certain people. As Vicky said, “they hadn’t changed, I had”. For Assad, it had caused difficulties in family relationships as his heightened awareness and changes in

values had caused him to question beliefs within his family such as their response to his nephew saying he was gay or Assad questioning his Aunt on the past treatment of his uncle with mental health problems. As he says in his interview and the digital story, in response to him defending his nephew's right to be gay, "They were not happy with me. Why are you supporting him? Why are you encouraging him? Including my own sister, she didn't talk to me for a while".

Vicky describes losing her sense of belonging. For her, this led to significant feelings of instability and an unclear sense of who she was. It led to fewer visits home which also reduced her support networks which would ordinarily have maintained her sense of well-being. For Vicky, this was part of the process of leaving home, attending university and becoming an adult which is typical of many students regardless of their area of study. For Vicky though, this was amplified by her changing values and beliefs as a result of her social work education and the perceived distance this placed between her and many of her old friends. She expressed frustration at their views and beliefs which she viewed as judgmental. Vicky links this disruption to her home life and support network with being less able to deal with difficulties which then presented during her time on the course but also as a factor in developing resilience, independence and maturity. As she identifies on her thought map (figure 3), she learnt that "home is not the only place in the world".

Experiences with family and friends, further informed the participants' learning and understanding of discrimination and oppression. As O'Sullivan and Taylor (2004, p.21) identified, "knowledge is not individually derived and held, but rather generated with relationships with others". The reactions of others had informed and enforced the participants' understanding and beliefs about the world and their place within it.

The impact of these changes had been stressful for all of those describing their experiences. Collins et al (2010) comment on the transitional nature of professional courses being a likely factor in why social work and nursing students have been shown to have higher levels of stress than more traditional, non vocational students. For the participants in this inquiry, the impact on their relationships with friends, family and colleagues had resulted from shifts in their own beliefs and values but also their unwillingness to ignore comments, jokes and behaviour and their need to challenge oppression and discrimination when they saw it. Their social work education had

affected not only their beliefs and values but also their behaviour outside of the classroom and the practice environment.

What was striking for me about the impact expressed by the participants, was that despite some very difficult experiences and conflict (both internally and externally), this was buffered by the positive outcomes of their learning and a sense that their increased knowledge, understanding and openness had "made them a better person". This view resonates again with Carl Roger's (1983) view of personal growth which can be achieved through education. It was supported by many of the participants' peers when sharing the digital story with them. Despite stressful experiences and difficult periods of transition, all of the participants reported this to be a positive change but also a permanent one. As Assad commented, "it's a long lasting change whether I like it or not!"

Are there models for fostering this development and change in a way that acknowledges this impact?

The final question posed at the end of chapter one when considering the current context of social work education, was whether there are models for fostering this development and change in a way that acknowledges the impact on the person and their lives. The review of the literature identified a number of whole person approaches to education which recognised that learning affected the whole person and that learning which engaged the whole person and their experiences, was more effective in achieving transformation. Insight gained from this inquiry supports this by demonstrating how participants learnt from a whole range of experiences, in all areas of their lives, as well as from their social work education.

This inquiry contributes new knowledge to inform the transformative learning debate. It demonstrates the extent to which transformative learning can impact on a person's life as they critically reflect on their beliefs, their behaviour and their relationships. When considering this question within the workshop, participants expressed a number of views of how transformative learning and critical reflection could be fostered in ways that acknowledge this impact.

At a fundamental level, the participants wanted educators to be aware and to recognise the impact social work education can have on a person's life. They wanted educators to

understand and acknowledge how difficult the process can be. Participants felt that the difficult aspects of the transition were best supported within social work education when:

- values and behaviours were modelled by staff
- educators acknowledged and understood the potential impact of learning on learners' lives
- networks for sharing experiences; seeking support; and enabling slow, developmental change were available.

From my perspective, listening to the participants' stories and representations, I discovered many aspects of their lives that I had not known about, which greatly increased my insight into their experiences; their processes of learning and their transition from student to professional. I concluded that it is important to recognise issues that have the potential to impact on a student's emotional well-being both in terms of our responsibility to provide a duty of care but also to enable them to make sense of their learning within the context of their own lives. Recognising the whole person within this context, provides the opportunity to enable the students' learning to be in depth and meaningful by using their whole selves as a resource (Rogers 1969; Knowles 1984 and Mezirow 2000). Whole person approaches, also enable learners to adapt to these changes in ways that can satisfy their personal needs and maintain a sense of well-being.

In my practice experience, how we achieve this within social work education is often assumed to be the domain of the practice placement and the role of the practice educator who provides one to one supervision to the student during their placement. The participants argued that the focus should be as strong within university based education. Jessica stated that she would have benefitted from one-to-one supervision within university based education, rather than just on placement

> The lecturer always said if I had any problems to come and see them but I've never really had any big problems. Placement is really good because you get to sit down with somebody and it may be a little thing but if it's not dealt with it can become a big thing. It would have been nice to have had more time to just talk about your experiences and to reflect with someone else.

The challenge for social work educators is to develop strategies for students to satisfy this need within the available resources. Whilst practice learning support is fundamental to the learning experience, as demonstrated by the participants in this inquiry, the role of the university based educator is paramount in enabling student social workers to make sense of their learning in order to become the insightful, confident, resilient and empathic social workers the profession requires.

Focus on the educator – student relationship and modelling these qualities can be achieved by the whole person approaches to learning explored in chapters two and three, where this relationship was identified as key (Rogers 1993; Knowles 1994; Mezirow 1997; Lee and Greene 2003; Cranton 2006; Grise-Owens et al 2010; Walton 2010). Fundamental to each of these approaches is the shift in role of the educator from teacher to facilitator. When educators demonstrate the above qualities of being insightful, confident, resilient and empathic, learners can seek to develop their own confidence and autonomous thought. They can be supported to find their own path and ways of making meaning from the range of catalysts and disorientating dilemmas they are presented with, inside and out of the classroom or social work environment.

Enabling learners to find their own path, does suggest the need for individualised, personalised approaches to the student experience. This provides an interesting parallel with the personalisation agenda within social work practice which is making the same call for working with adults in need of care and support (SCIE Report 20 2010). Whilst the demand for this with students has increased, not least due to the increase in tuition fees and student expectations, these are restricted by the difficulties identified in chapter one of student cohorts growing in size and potentially conflicting demands placed on universities, programmes and students. These issues are explored further in part three of this thesis within the focus on my own practice development in response to this.

Generating experiential, presentational, propositional and practical knowing

The remainder of this chapter seeks to explore what the research inquiry has achieved in terms of generating experiential, presentational, propositional and practical knowing.

Experiential knowing

As explained in chapter five, experiential knowing is gained through direct contact with the person involved and requires empathy and resonance to develop a perception of the

person's experience (Heron 1996; Cowling 2004b). I sought to achieve this from the start of the research inquiry through the use of a range of tools to develop this perception. One of the objectives identified at the start of this thesis was to gain this insight by listening to students' views, experiences and perspectives. I wanted to be open to hearing what their experience had been and what their perspectives were. As an educator, I wanted to support them to express and reflect on this experience.

My perception at the start of the process was that the participants will have been affected significantly by their social work education. I based this on my own experience as a student and my practice wisdom of working within the field and listening to the experiences of students over this time. I was struck however by the extent of this impact for the participants. Whilst I had the view that the impact was significant, I had only considered this in vague and generalised terms without giving much consideration to what this actually meant for each individual. The depth and richness of the stories and the unique detail of how their learning had impacted on their lives, lead to far more insight into what this experience was like, than I had perhaps anticipated. The inquiry generated experiential knowing in the way it brought to life these different experiences. This living portrait (Talley et al 2005) provided insight into the context of undergraduate qualifying social work education which the participants described as exhausting, draining, emotionally testing; frustrating; stressful; difficult, challenging; exciting, inspiring, humbling and life changing.

Whilst I expressed concern in chapter one that social work education was losing sight of the person, I excluded myself from this criticism. My belief was that I maintained this recognition of the needs of the individual but that this was not always recognised or valued by the education system as a whole. My learning, gained from seeking insight and generating experiential knowledge, was that I too had lost sight of the lived experience for social work students by failing to recognise the extent and ways in which this impact could be experienced. As previously identified, Heron (1996, p.52) suggests that developing experiential knowledge involves the researcher "imaging and feeling the presence of some energy, entity, person, place, process or thing". I achieved this by gaining such close insight into the lives of the participants. I sought to capture this in the presentation of findings through the thought maps, profiles, representations, stories and the digital story. The effectiveness of which is discussed next.

Presentational knowing

As explained in chapter five, presentational knowing can emerge from experiential knowing by developing representations of the person, group or context being explored. In this case, the impact of social work education on the whole person, in particular a person's beliefs, values and behaviour. The findings in chapter eight sought to represent this experience. They incorporated expressions and explanations from the participants themselves and my own interpretations as expressed through images, stories, thought maps and a digital story. Viewed as a whole, the findings seek to capture the essence of the experience of social work education and to present this as a synoptic representation rather than breaking down into component parts which no longer reflect the whole. From this, the observer is encouraged to develop an intuitive grasp of their significance as suggested by Heron (1996).

Once viewed together, I found the representations provided a powerful insight into the experience of those involved. A number of patterns started to emerge as discussed earlier in this chapter. The representations maintain the primary voice of the participants and I found that by returning to them again and again, I was able to distance myself from their creation and reflect on the content, the meaning and the resonance for me and for others. Like Jessica commented "I could reflect on the meaning in a new light, maybe because I could hear it more objectively". I found that the representations had taken on a form of their own. I also continued to return to the audio recordings and other original contributions by the participants throughout the research process. I felt this was necessary to feel the energy of the person and their experience as suggested by Heron (1996). This helped with the process of gaining an intuitive grasp.

I am mindful that the representations may not have captured the whole picture but am confident that, as the approach aims to do, it has captured the essence of this experience for the participants. As the kaleidoscope metaphor implies, the picture is constantly evolving. Representations can only freeze frame a moment in time from which to explore and reflect and to identify emerging patterns which reflect wholeness. My intuitive grasp has been demonstrated through my interpretations within this chapter and the responses to the representations by others, including the participants. Learning and conclusions from these reflections have been used to generate propositional knowing.

Propositional knowing

Propositional knowing is the expression of statements which are drawn from this intuitive grasp of the knowledge gained so far within UAI. For the purpose of this inquiry, propositional statements reflect the findings of this study. As explored in chapter nine (trustworthiness and quality of the findings), the aim of qualitative research is not to produce statements that hold true for everyone but for the reader to make up their own mind as to the transferability of the findings into different settings (Elliott 2005). Whilst a unitary appreciative profile in UAI may incorporate specific or unique representations of each person or group; themes, theories and reflections can be generated by the participants which may have meaning for others and may in turn, generate further reflections and insights.

To some extent propositional statements are expressed in the findings, in particular the digital story, as this has sought a synoptic representation of the four types of knowing. With regards to propositional and practical knowing however these were more implicit than the other types of knowing and are left to the observer to create explicitly in a way that has meaning and significance for them. Participants identified a list of statements that were true for them, which have been listed in their entirety in chapter eight (presentation of findings). These have informed my own interpretation of the significance of the findings as a whole. I have generated statements as a result of engaging with the data and from reflecting on the resonance for others. Propositional statements I have generated from this inquiry are applicable to more global contexts such as social work education generally. These are presented here in the form of two thought maps so as to demonstrate the non linear, multi-dimensional nature of the statements being made and the use of propositional statements to capture something which is constantly changing and developing.

Propositional statements

Map one (**Figure 10**): Propositional statements regarding the impact of social work education on the whole person.

Map two (**Figure 11**): Propositional statements regarding the learning process.

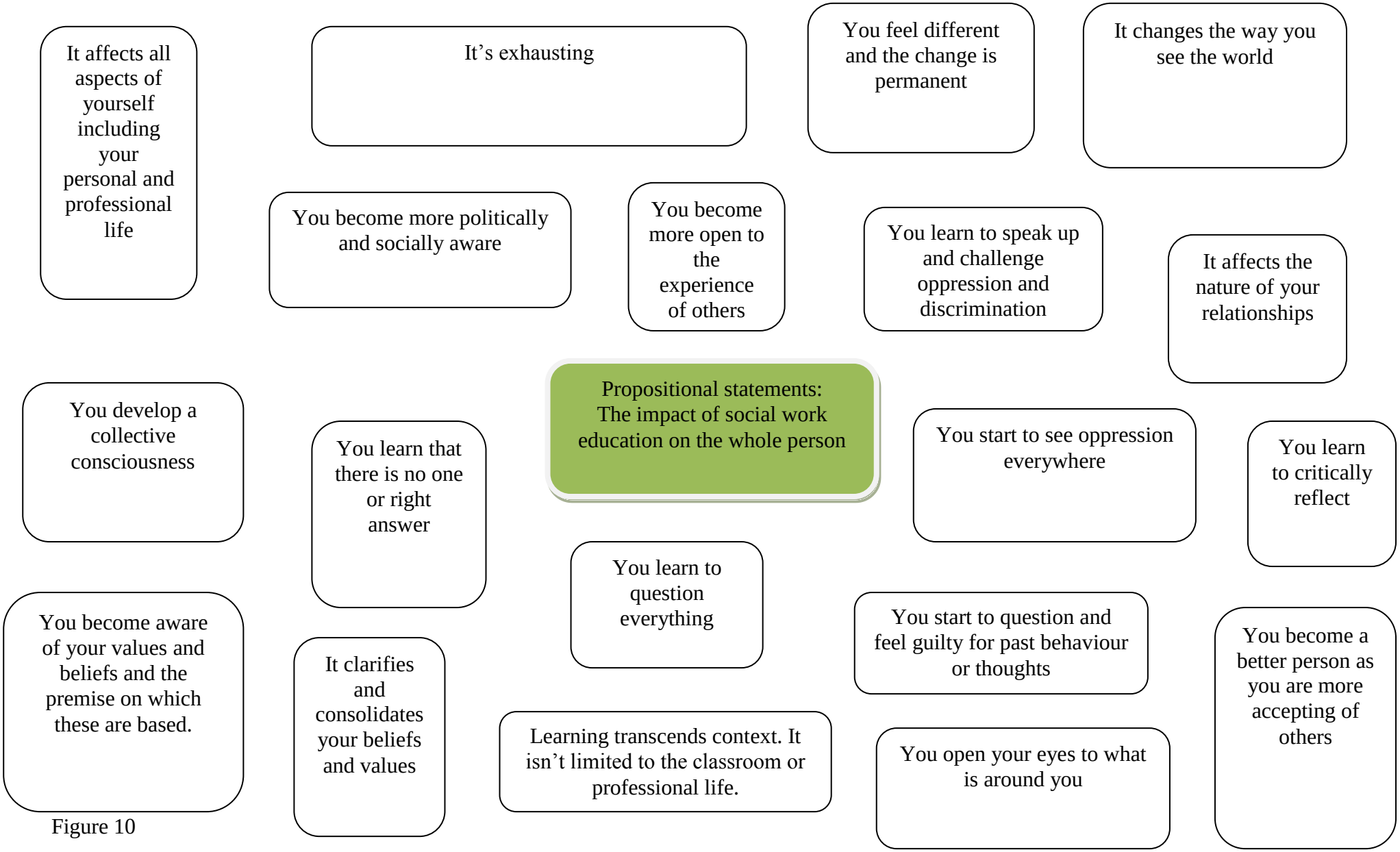

It affects all aspects of yourself including your personal and professional life
It's exhausting
You feel different and the change is permanent
It changes the way you see the world
You become more politically and socially aware
You become more open to the experience of others
You learn to speak up and challenge oppression and discrimination
It affects the nature of your relationships
Propositional statements: The impact of social work education on the whole person
You develop a collective consciousness
You learn that there is no one or right answer
You start to see oppression everywhere
You learn to critically reflect
You learn to question everything
You become aware of your values and beliefs and the premise on which these are based.
It clarifies and consolidates your beliefs and values
You start to question and feel guilty for past behaviour or thoughts
You become a better person as you are more accepting of others
Learning transcends context. It isn't limited to the classroom or professional life.
You open your eyes to what is around you

Figure 10

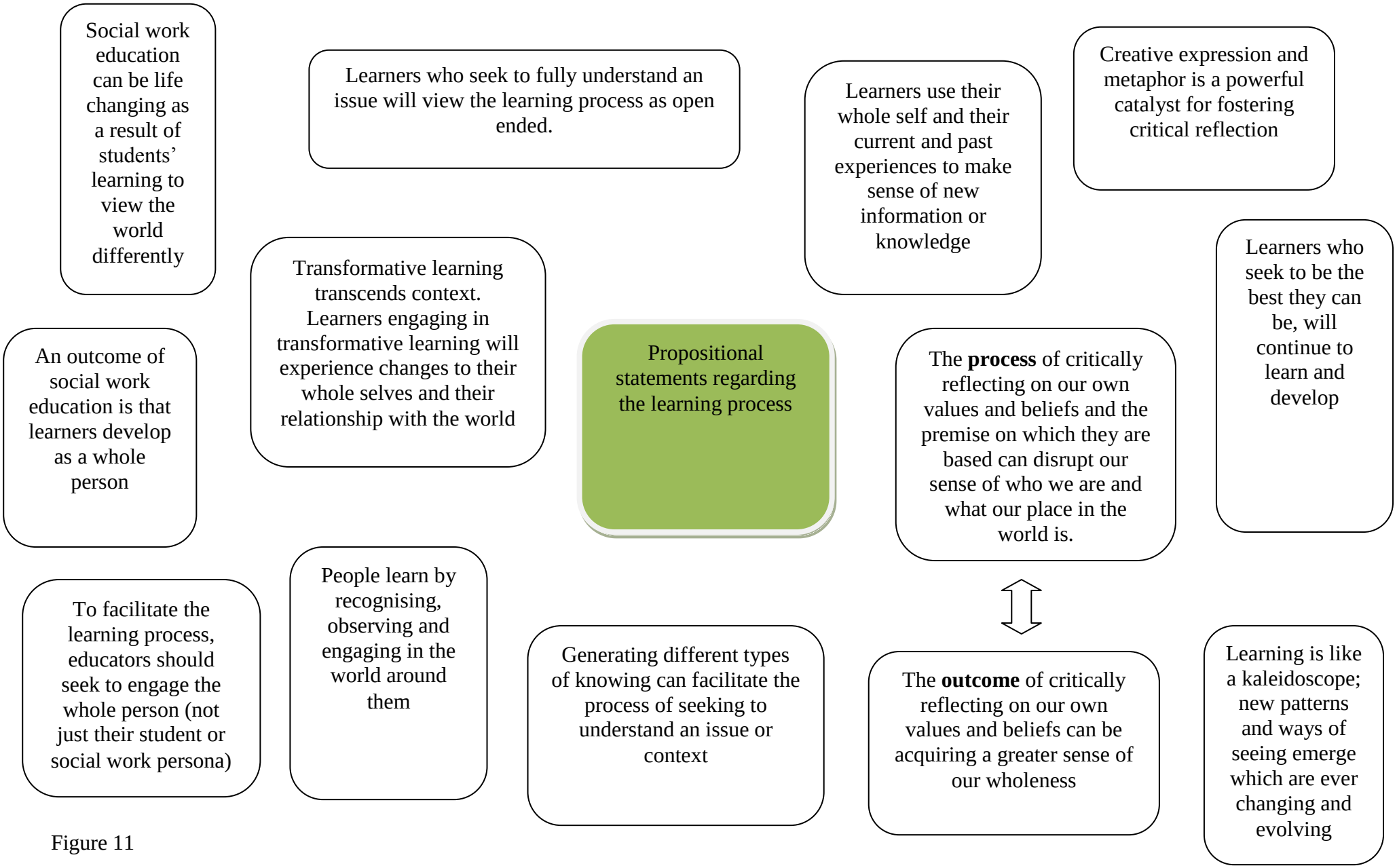

Social work education can be life changing as a result of students' learning to view the world differently
Learners who seek to fully understand an issue will view the learning process as open ended.
Learners use their whole self and their current and past experiences to make sense of new information or knowledge
Creative expression and metaphor is a powerful catalyst for fostering critical reflection
Transformative learning transcends context. Learners engaging in transformative learning will experience changes to their whole selves and their relationship with the world
Learners who seek to be the best they can be, will continue to learn and develop
An outcome of social work education is that learners develop as a whole person
Propositional statements regarding the learning process
The **process** of critically reflecting on our own values and beliefs and the premise on which they are based can disrupt our sense of who we are and what our place in the world is.
To facilitate the learning process, educators should seek to engage the whole person (not just their student or social work persona)
People learn by recognising, observing and engaging in the world around them
Generating different types of knowing can facilitate the process of seeking to understand an issue or context
The **outcome** of critically reflecting on our own values and beliefs can be acquiring a greater sense of our wholeness
Learning is like a kaleidoscope; new patterns and ways of seeing emerge which are ever changing and evolving

Figure 11

Practical knowing

Propositional statements generated from the research inquiry and my interpretation of the findings, have been used to develop the practice development component of this Doctorate in Professional Practice. Examples of practical knowing are explored in part three.

Conclusion

Chapter ten has sought to document my own interpretation of the findings generated within this UAI. Experiences are constantly evolving and changing and are captured here only as a snap shot or a freeze frame of the whole experience of social work education for the participants. UAI aims to create a synoptic representation of something which is viewed as a whole due to the holistic view of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts. It is based on the indivisible nature of human beings and the integrality of humans and their environment (Rogers 1990). As such, UAI avoids breaking down the findings into component parts or losing sight of the individual and unique experiences that can add to our understanding of a wider context. My interpretations of the findings focus on their relevance and significance for me and my views on the insight gained for social work education as a whole.

Particular themes and patterns emerged in relation to the impact of transformative learning. Student participants expressed changes to the way they viewed the world; their sense of injustice and the need to challenge this; the impact on their relationships with others and on their sense of well-being. Their approach to learning was based on curiosity and the desire to develop as a person rather than simply to add to their knowledge base or pass the degree. Their aim was to understand and make meaning from their experiences and the situations they encountered which in turn facilitated their development as critical thinkers. The findings and the implications for social work education are summarised within **figures 10 and 11**. How these interpretations and conclusions can be used to develop practice and practical knowing are explored in part three and the following chapters on practice development.

Part three: practice

One of the aims of UAI as explored in chapter five is to generate experiential, presentational, propositional and practical knowing. The first three have been explored and discussed in the previous chapters. The final type, practical knowing, is fundamental to UAI as it seeks for knowledge, insight and awareness gained from the inquiry to make a difference to a person's practice or behaviour (Heron 1996; Cowling 2004b). Whether this was achieved for the participants within the research inquiry has been reflected on within part two of this thesis when presenting and interpreting the findings. Participants commented that the research process had enabled them to view the impact of their social work education from a broader perspective. In turn, this enabled them to recognise their achievements and increased their sense of satisfaction. In terms of practical knowing, it gave them confidence in their own skills and knowledge and the value base they based their decisions on. Practical knowing is also fundamental to a Doctorate in Professional Practice (Doncaster and Thorne 2000; Bourner et al 2001). One of the four components of the Bournemouth University programme, in addition to reviewing the literature, conducting a research inquiry and providing a personal narrative, is to use this learning to develop an area of professional practice (Bournemouth University Doctor of Professional Practice student handbook 2004). Part three of this thesis explores the impact of the doctoral process on my pedagogic practice and on my own personal and professional development.

Chapter eleven focuses on the practical component in relation to my practice as a social work educator. I identify practical knowledge generated from the research inquiry and demonstrate and reflect on how this has impacted on my own pedagogic practice. I draw specifically on areas of my work as a social work lecturer to demonstrate this change and development whilst considering the contribution to practical knowing for the more global context of social work education. The development of a new model of practice learning is explored within the latter half of the chapter and is linked specifically to the proposed Professional Capabilities Framework for social work and a proposed 30 day practice learning component to focus specifically on skill development (SWRB 2011)

Chapter twelve reflects the whole person approach to learning advocated within this thesis. I explore and reflect on the impact of the doctoral process and the research

inquiry on my own development. I identify my own transformative learning and as a parallel process to that of the participants, express and analyse the impact of this learning on my own beliefs, values and behaviour.

Part three concludes with a thesis conclusion which explores the extent to which the thesis has met the original aims and objectives of the study.

Chapter 11: Practice development

Throughout the doctoral process, it has been my intention for knowledge generated from the research inquiry along with current literature, to inform my own practice development and the practice development component of this thesis. The extent to which this occurred is explored within this chapter. I present a synoptic view of my own practice development as a whole and explore more specifically how my learning and insight has influenced the development of a new model of practice learning. The model contributes to the development of social work education due to its compatibility with the proposed Professional Capabilities Framework for Social Work and a proposed 30 day practice learning component to focus specifically on skill development (SWRB 2011).

At the transfer stage (June 2009), I anticipated that the impact on my practice would be the development of a learning, facilitation or reflective tool for use within social work education, either within practice learning or university based learning. The creation of this was identified as one of the two overall aims of the study. My intention was to foster critical reflection by building on the methods used within UAI, which are based on creating presentational knowledge, to both express and interpret events and patterns within one's own life and practice.

I realised later in the doctoral process, that whilst I had successfully developed and was using such tools, my practice development had been far wider than this. As with my observations with the participants, learning for me had transcended context. Like the kaleidoscope metaphor, I had identified for transformative learning, there was no distinct beginning, middle or end to my learning or a linear process of applying my learning to practice. As Cowling's (2004a) explanation of praxis suggests learning and practice are integrated as they are being informed simultaneously. My increased research mindedness and emerging knowledge, understanding and awareness of social work education issues, transformative learning and the impact on the whole person added to the kaleidoscope of knowledge, insight and practice development. Patterns, views and ideas informed my every day educational practice, which in turn have continued to evolve and change.

In generating practical knowing during the doctoral process, I developed a view that there was a need to:

- Develop teaching methods which foster critical reflection and autonomous thought
- Engage in conscious raising to enable students to recognise, question and reflect on the premise on which their beliefs and values are based
- Create learning environments where learners are encouraged to think for themselves and where they can engage in a process of self discovery
- Engage the whole person in the learning process in acknowledgment of the findings which demonstrate that this is how adults learn
- Develop strategies for supporting students to manage the potential impact of transformative learning on their whole lives
- Continue to draw on research informed teaching and practice to ensure the best outcomes for those involved.

As explained within chapter ten, when exploring my own interpretation of the findings, the area I was perhaps most struck by when gaining insight into the experiences of the participants was the extent to which their learning affected their whole lives; the way they viewed the world; their relationships with others and how these experiences had in turn informed their learning and their understanding of social work practice. It was by using these experiences that their learning had become meaningful and purposeful. This is reflected in the whole person approaches to education such as Mezirow's transformative learning theory; Knowles' androgogy; Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed and Rogers' humanist theory. It led to my proposition in chapter ten **(figures 10 and 11)** that social work education should seek to engage the whole person, not just an aspect of themselves such as their student or social work persona, as this is how adults learn.

Engaging the whole person in the learning process involves using approaches to education such as problem based learning, self discovery and seeking ways to understand (Rogers 1983; Knowles 1984; Mezirow 2000; Von Kotze and Cooper 2000; Cranton 2002; Phillips et al 2002; Davis-Manigaulte et al 2006; Pearson and Somekh 2006; Rush 2008; Bernhardt 2009; Walton 2010). Whole person and transformative

approaches have been assimilated into my pedagogic practice across the board. I actively encourage learners to consider their own personal experiences and practice wisdom and to use this as a basis from which to explore more formal knowledge such as research, legislation and policy.

Figure 12 attempts to capture my own pedagogic practice development by creating a synoptic view of the whole, as is the aim of UAI. Examples are explored further within this chapter. A more in depth look at how my learning has influenced the development of a new model of practice learning is also provided. Conclusions are considered from a wider global perspective to ascertain the contribution of new knowledge to social work education and practice.

Whole person approaches to my pedagogic practice identified in **figure 12** have not resulted solely from the research process. As with the participants, my learning in many cases consolidated my views rather than changed them. There are examples of the areas identified within my practice prior to the doctoral process such as developing peer mentoring; teaching reflective skills; and using real case scenarios. I frequently invited people with firsthand experience into lectures to share their stories, experiences and views on social work, in order to challenge some of the students' preconceptions. My learning throughout the doctoral process, lead to my heightened awareness of the significance of certain approaches and the evidence base underpinning them. It provided evidence to justify my attempts to incorporate these into the curriculum.

As stated at the start of this thesis, my approach to education is based on my social work values. I was always of the belief that as educators we should support, nurture and develop the competence of student social workers, in addition to sharing knowledge and assessing progress and achievement. Knowledge and insight gained, through this research inquiry and literature review, gave me the confidence to develop these principles further. It provided me with knowledge of how this could be achieved and to recognise opportunities and their benefits such as peer assisted learning when they arose. As a result, my practice as an educator is significantly different from at the start of the doctoral process. The significance of this learning is demonstrated within **figure 12** by identifying research informed teaching and practice as the thread that runs throughout the changes.

Figure 12: Synoptic view of my own practice development

Increased contact between students

A pattern which emerged from the review of the literature; from listening to the participants' experiences and from its use within the research inquiry was the value of shared learning and peer support in enabling students to make sense of their learning (Von Kotze and Cooper 2000; Phillips et al 2002; Pearson and Somekh 2006; Taylor 2007; Merriam and Kim 2008; Walton 2010). Increased opportunities have been created for students to work in a mix of groups throughout the year. I have overall responsibility for first year social work students within my degree programme. As part of this role, I invite second and third year students to meet with the first years during induction week to share their experiences of settling into the course and academic life and to offer encouragement. Since the study, I have increased the opportunities for this contact and support by inviting them again at later stages in the year, such as during preparation for practice learning. A Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) programme has been introduced (Capstick 2004; Tariq 2005) where third year students provide timetabled peer support to first year students on areas of their choosing such as topic discussion and academic writing. Students have commented that contact with second and third years has led them to recognise social work students across campus and that this has led to informal networks of peer support across the year groups. As with other evaluations of PAL (Tariq 2005), students valued the informality of peer assisted learning and felt more comfortable asking questions and admitting to mistakes than in more formal lecturer led environments.

My observation is that increased groupwork and peer support has helped to develop a sense of group cohesion within the cohorts. Students routinely work together and most value the benefits of shared learning and group work. As allocated groups are different for each unit, students work alongside most, if not all people within the cohort at one time or another during their first year on the programme. Feedback from students has been that this has helped them "to find their place within the group" and not to feel as isolated. Students themselves have set up Facebook groups and arranged social events to maintain this cohesiveness. The staff team for the programme have commented on the shared identity of the two cohorts to have experienced this input, despite these being larger groups than in previous years. A strong peer network may have contributed to the high retention rate for these cohorts. At the time of writing, the cohort entering their second year has experienced no withdrawals from those enrolled as full time students, achieving a 100% retention rate.

Shared learning and peer support may be an effective response for my concerns expressed previously regarding the individual needs and experience of the learner being lost, particularly within increasingly large cohorts. I would argue that shared learning has enabled students to actively engage in the learning process and prevented the passive acquisition of knowledge that they may have expected or experienced on educational programmes before. This may have benefitted Jessica who, in the research study, described feeling isolated and quite private within the group as she "struggled to find her place" despite describing herself as a sociable person.

Shared learning and group work has been difficult for some. This is for a range of reasons from those more comfortable working individually rather than part of a group and differences in values and work ethics impacting on the productivity and cohesiveness of each group. As I identified in chapter three, it is important to recognise individual and internalised learning processes such as discernment (Scott 1997, Elias 1997) as well as individual needs and starting points (Lee and Green 2003). An existing unit on communication and groupwork has been effective in facilitating this process. Students learn about group theory, dynamics and roles and are encouraged to recognise their own contribution and impact on the group process. The focus of learning is presented from the perspective that as a social worker they will be working within teams and will need to engage constructively in group processes. Students are assessed through a group presentation but also an individual reflective assignment. Marking this enabled me to gain insight into the difficult processes experienced by individuals and the skills they used to manage conflict. There were many examples within the assignments of quieter students becoming more assertive and more dominant members tempering their contribution on recognition of their impact. There remained a number who did not develop insight and self awareness and focussed the blame for any difficulties encountered on others. Feedback is provided to enable students to reflect on this and assignments are shared with the students' practice educators who can start to address some of these areas for development on a one to one basis.

As students evaluated contact with other year groups as highly valuable, I extended the network of support by increasing the involvement of graduates as guest lecturers within teaching and in providing one day shadowing opportunities. Student evaluation has included comments that contact with current and previous students has been reassuring and has left them feeling able to cope and manage with the demands of the course. As the participants in this study identified at the end of the workshop process, it is valuable

to hear other people's experiences and to recognise similarities. Opportunities to share experiences and gain support, increased their feeling of security during the learning process and increased their self confidence; "it made me realise I could do it". This resonates with Collins et al's (2010) study into the stress, support and well-being of social work students and the importance students place on peer support.

Practitioner sessions are also rated highly by students who value the current practice issues and knowledge that practitioners are able to share (Williams et al 2009). Involving practitioners who had also been students of the programme, added to this as they were able to relate to how the students may be feeling and share their own experiences of learning. This helped the students make sense of their learning in relation to their own lives, their development as practitioners and to recognise their learning as purposeful (Knowles 1973, 1984 and 1990). The opportunities meet current demands of the social work profession to better integrate learning between the classroom and the field (Clapton et al 2006; SWTF 2009).

Increased acknowledgment within the curriculum of the impact of stress and stressful situations

A significant pattern which emerged from the research inquiry, which is largely missing from the literature, was the impact of transformative learning on the student's emotional well-being. This is in addition to the impact of stress and stressful situations within the social work practice environment and the pressures of studying for a degree alongside other commitments such as parenting (Green-Lister 2003). The impact of stress is acknowledged by the SWTF (2009) in their call for social workers to demonstrate resilience and for social work educators to foster this quality. The extent of this impact was evident within the participants' stories. As identified in chapter ten, participants described the impact of their learning as exhausting, draining, emotionally testing; frustrating; stressful; difficult, challenging; exciting, inspiring, humbling and life changing. As Jessica commented after helping a family in crisis "It was almost like I'd walked away and I felt like I was carrying all of their stress".

I responded to the insight gained in a number of ways. Participants identified the need for educators to acknowledge the impact of social work education, including transformative learning on their lives. This is now acknowledged more explicitly across the programme. Sessions focussing on the development of resilience are delivered in

each year of the programme. The aim is to acknowledge the impact of stress; and to create opportunities for sharing experiences, strategies and tools for managing the impact of stress and stressful situations. Feedback from one student was that along with the strategies, the most useful outcome of the session for her was the acknowledgment that social work education could be stressful. She said "I realise its okay to feel what I am feeling". Again, sharing experiences and identifying similarities between self and others, facilitated this process. Students identified that they often felt a pressure not to show weakness, particularly when being assessed in practice. They were now recognising that acknowledging feelings of stress in order to identify solutions, showed strength of character and was viewed as good practice.

Parallel sessions on managing stress and stressful situations are delivered to practice educators and placement supervisors who have described being more aware of the need to share strategies they have developed over years of practice. One colleague identified that "I sometimes lose sight of how situations I think of as routine and familiar, can be very distressing for a student seeing them for the first time". Stress management sessions supported students to develop emotional resilience by normalising experiences and giving them licence to acknowledge, express and develop strategies for coping with pressures. Strategies are then developed further within one-to-one practice supervision.

More direct support for students to adapt to university learning

An area which emerged from reviewing the literature was how expectations students have about education affect their learning experience. Passive or traditional learners may focus on wanting the correct answer and may see the role of the educator in imparting this knowledge (Lin and Cranton 2005). Not having this can cause distress and uncertainty (Knowles 1990; Lee and Greene 2003; Cranton 2006; Grise-Owens et al 2010; Walton 2010). Participants in this study were not passive learners. They demonstrated inquisitiveness and curiosity; asking questions and searching for the meaning in their experiences and the knowledge they gained. Interest in the lecturers' opinions was evident (Jessica described some as inspiring, helping her to think outside the box) but they did not assume these to be the only views or answers. Participants demonstrated the autonomous, reflective thinking identified in the literature as necessary for social work practice and as called for by the Social Work Task Force (2009) and the Social Work Reform Board (2011). As a result, I have sought ways of enabling all students to develop this approach.

One strategy for fostering curiosity and autonomous thought was to introduce a learning to learn week at the start of the programme. Students participate in sessions which explore learning styles, academic writing, searching for information, self managed study and different approaches to learning. I use activities and share information to create disorientating dilemmas or catalysts for critical reflection (Mezirow 2000). Focus for the week is on the need for learners to 'un-learn' previously held views and assumptions as well as learn, during their social work education.

One activity uses Peter's projection map (Peters 1974) which seeks to depict the world map with spatial and area accuracy as opposed to the more widely used Mercator map which is used for navigational purposes but otherwise gives the wrong impression in terms of the sizes of countries in relation to each other (Petersmap 2011). I use the map to challenge what the learners think they know and assume to be fact. It challenges the notion of absolute truth and introduces the need to challenge one's own thoughts and views and the bases for these. From the offset it encourages learners to think and to question and to recognise the evolving nature and complexity of knowledge. One student said, after her first week on the course, "I will never take anything at face value again". Whether this is the case or not, it provides clear expectations to learners regarding the need to question the knowledge they base their practice on.

Increased focus on the use of self

An underlying principle of this study has been the value I place on a person's wholeness. As the findings and discussions show (chapters eight, nine and ten), learning and experiences affect the whole person and their relationship with the world. As demonstrated in previous discussions on educational theory (chapters two and three), drawing on life experiences and knowledge is how adults learn (Knowles 1990; O'Sullivan and Taylor 2004). A person's views, values and behaviour are directly influenced by their experience and as such the use of self is fundamental to a person's practice as a social worker. As highlighted in chapter one (social work education context) the use of self and personal qualities is seen as pivotal to competent social work practice by practitioners and people who use social work services (Skills for Care 2002). There is a role for social work educators to enable learners to recognise their use of self and the impact of their life experiences, beliefs, values and behaviour on their social work practice.

One example of addressing this within my pedagogic practice has been within a preparation for practice unit. Students are required to compile a portfolio which demonstrates their readiness to undertake practice learning. Prior to my learning during the doctoral study, this had focussed on academic achievement, IT skills, fitness to practice, feedback from others and the demonstration of social work skills such as verbal communication. The portfolio and related teaching input now, has much more emphasis on developing as a whole person, as identified in the discussion of findings chapter. I have developed tools to facilitate critical reflection based on those used within the research inquiry and whole person approaches to education such as those developed by Mezirow, Rogers, Freire and Knowles. Students are encouraged to increase their awareness of their own identity (Rogers 1983) and social status (Freire 1993) and to provide a personal profile to represent this (what makes you, you?). Drawing on the creative expression used within the research inquiry; the "what makes you, you?" research workshop activity and professional social work values (TOPSS 2002), learners are encouraged to use a form of expression of their choice to present their personal profile. Students consider their values and beliefs by including what is important to them and what their likes and dislikes are. The primary aim is for them to consider their own identity and to recognise their uniqueness. Profiles are then used as a basis from which to explore differences and similarities with others and to consider whether their perceived universal beliefs may actually be unique to them or their culture.

The personal profile activity is an effective learning tool in a number of ways. It places emphasis on the importance within social work on personal qualities and self awareness. Reflection on the profile is used to explore awareness of the learners own social status and power in order to develop as an anti-oppressive practitioner (Freire 1993; Thompson 2009). The process is based on Cranton and King (2003) and Lin and Cranton's (2005) view of Jung's individuation and O'Sullivan's ecological perspective of transformative learning (O'Sullivan and Taylor 2004) where to question assumptions and norms, individuals must be able to see themselves as both indivisible and distinct from others and the world around them.

The activity enabled a number of students to express themselves creatively as they were not restricted to a particular style of academic writing. Learners were encouraged to be themselves rather than to present a persona of what they thought social work educators were looking for. Students used photos, drawings, collages, word walls, narrative and

metaphor to represent ‘what makes me, me’. One student wrote a poem about how her garden was a metaphor for who she was; including descriptions of the garden as wild, messy and disorganised on first sight but on closer inspection, colourful, creative, productive, quirky and full of life. Another student made a collage which represented all aspects of her whole self. This included a number of doors where she revealed hidden aspects. She explained that the images on the front were how she liked to present herself to others but these were essentially a false persona. She reflected on how she had only added her ‘real self’ after viewing her original profile and reflecting on the potential impact of this on her practice and her relationships with others as it did not capture a true sense of who she was.

On the whole I was struck by how personal the profiles were and how open the students had been to sharing their sense of self. This demonstrated to me a number of the factors identified in chapter three which increase the likelihood of transformative learning occurring such as openness, honesty and developmental readiness (Walton 2010). Some students did struggle with the use of self, providing minimal information and detail on their personal profile. In these cases I considered whether they had felt uncomfortable sharing personal information; had been unclear as to what had been required of them or had not placed value on the task itself.

Whilst exploring the importance of self awareness and the value of this within social work practice, I was clear that students should only share what they felt comfortable being read by others, including their practice educator. As with the participants in this study, control over what to share remained with them. Whether the students who provided minimal information were exercising this choice is an area for further consideration. As students are encouraged to share their profiles with their practice educators at the start of their next practice learning unit, this can be explored on an individual level with each student in a way that is appropriate to them and purposeful for their practice learning and professional development.

Increased use of current affairs as a catalyst to foster critical reflection

The research inquiry increased my insight and understanding of how a range of catalysts within a person's life can trigger transformative learning. Triggers and catalysts for the participants in this study often had personal resonance. Terry's experience of parental domestic violence and Vicky's personal experience led to critical reflection on their own practice when confronted with similar issues, leading to deeper understanding and insight. They were able to critically reflect on their views and values and how these had been informed by their wider experience. Educational literature explored in chapters two and three reinforces the benefits of learning which is meaningful and purposeful (Knowles 1984, Rogers 2002 amongst others). In social work education this was well evidenced in Grise-Owens et al's 2010 study which effectively used the local experience of Hurricane Katrina to enable learners to explore the impact of social and cultural oppression.

As a result of this, I sought ways of making learning within lectures more meaningful for the students by placing it within the context of their lives. In a working with adults unit, I encouraged learners to visualise their 80th birthday and to identify how they would like to spend it (where are you? who is there? what are you doing? how do you feel?). The aim was to acknowledge diversity by enabling them to compare and contrast with the wishes of their peers but also as a catalyst for further discussion on how older people are generally supported and treated in the UK. I drew on a Parliamentary and Health Ombudsman report into the treatment of older people within the NHS (Care and Compassion 2011). Sharing the report was effective in encouraging debate as this was an emotive subject. Students were able to consider the issues which may have led to poor outcomes for older people in hospital such as social and cultural views of older people; policies regarding age; and their own knowledge and practice wisdom gained from working with older people. Because the events were real and current, learners quickly engaged in the learning process and were able to identify complexities in the issues being discussed. There were many examples of them considering theory, legislation and policies as well as values and beliefs to explore the issues, making it an effective tool for enabling students to identify how they were linking theory to practice. I conducted a similar exercise using a recent BBC documentary into the treatment of adults with learning disabilities in a care home (Britain's Homecare Scandal, Panorama 2011). The activity was equally as effective in enabling learners to make sense of the issues and consider the implications for their own life and social work practice.

Involving people who have used services in the facilitation of learning

A number of participants in the study identified their contact with people with firsthand experience of using social work services as a catalyst for their critical reflection and transformative learning. After meeting a guest with Cerebral Palsy, Vicky said "I'd made an assumption that because she couldn't communicate very well she didn't know what was going on and I realise how wrong I was, thinking that". Incorporating service user perspectives in curriculum design, admissions, assessment, teaching and learning is a requirement of the social work degree nationally (Department of Health 2002). Service user involvement has been demonstrated within the literature as an effective and well evaluated educative tool within practitioner education (Rush 2008; Sadd 2011). It is commonplace within my practice to invite people in to share their experiences, to enable students to increase their insight and empathy for a particular experience and perhaps to challenge their pre-conceptions.

During my doctoral studies, my colleagues developed a programme which explored ways of involving service users more meaningfully within practice learning environments (Sadd 2011). Service users are now involved in the supervision of students; providing sign language training or drug awareness; and in planning the student's induction whilst on placement. This led me to explore more meaningful ways of recognising service users as experts and involving them in facilitating students' transformative learning. In a communication unit we involved carers and service users by asking them to share how poor and effective communication had affected their experience of social work services. They then facilitated small group discussions where students considered what they could learn from this, to develop their own practice. In a working with adults unit, guests shared their stories but spoke specifically of the impact of particular policies or legislation on their lives such as personalisation and the introduction of direct payments from which to manage their own support needs. This approach provided another effective strategy for helping students to relate theory to practice and to develop the inquisitive approach to learning demonstrated by the participants in this study.

Involving service users in sharing their knowledge, insight and views was successful in fostering social work values and transformative learning in a number of ways. Involvement challenged the students pre-conceptions of what a service user might be

like and placed value on the knowledge an expert by experience will have. It demonstrated the value in speaking at length with the person themselves to ascertain what their experience is and what their views are rather than focussing purely on their diagnosis, label or situation. This was certainly influenced by my own experience of learning from the research inquiry where I had thought that I had known the students prior to the interviews and workshop and yet discovered far more in one interview, about their whole selves and their experience of learning, than in three years of them being on the course. For the students, it helped significantly in enabling them to explore and question different policies and practices by considering the impact on those whose lives were affected directly by them

Project based learning

An example, where my learning has perhaps had the biggest impact, has been in the development of a new practice learning unit based on whole person approaches such as project based learning and processes of self discovery (Rogers 1983; Knowles 1984; Mezirow 1997; Pilling-Cormick 1997; Cranton 2006; Walton 2010). Traditionally social work practice learning experiences involve being placed within an agency setting and learning to 'do social work' such as assessments, reviews, group work, key working and multi-disciplinary liaison (TOPSS 2002). This is usually over a period of 80 to 100 days. Supervision is used to enable students to identify what their learning is; to develop their understanding of social work issues (Davies and Beddoe 2000; Doel and Shardlow 2005) and to identify whether they have demonstrated the National Occupational Standards for social work (TOPSS 2002). I am mindful that for many students, this places greater emphasis on technical and procedural knowledge (Mezirow 2000; Mackay and Woodward 2010) and learning how to do social work rather than how to develop as a person and as a social worker. As a result, I would argue that students often focus on procedural knowing before gaining insight into the experience for the service user group. Only those who take a wider, more holistic approach to their learning, viewing the context as a whole, seem to question, explore and critically reflect on the relationship between their self, their practice, the agency, their relationship with those involved and the wider issues emerging from formal knowledge such as literature, research, legislation and policy. A more holistic approach, involves a process of stepping back and viewing the wider picture and recognising these as parts of the same whole rather than separate and disparate parts.

When the opportunity arose to develop a new unit which would count as 20 day practice learning in the first year of the degree programme, I sought to create a learning opportunity which drew on the practical knowing gained from this research inquiry. This became the community placement.

A new model of practice learning and skill development

In chapter one, I summarised the aim of social work education to improve the quality of the workforce through the development of knowledgeable, competent, confident, self aware and reflective practitioners who are able to cope with the pressures, demands and risks of the work, whilst maintaining a professional value base which places service users and carers at the heart of the process.

The literature identifies that many students were falling short of this (Lee and Greene 2003). Educational literature, explored in chapters two and three, suggests a number of factors which increase the likelihood of transformative learning, autonomous thought, critical reflection, personal development and professional competence developing (Pearson and Somekh 2006; Von Kotze and Cooper 2000; Phillips et al 2002; Taylor 2007; Merriam and Kim 2008; Rush 2008; Walton 2010 amongst others). These include self discovery, exploration, making meaning, project based learning and shared learning. Participants in this study showed that in depth, transformative learning was achieved when demonstrating inquisitiveness, curiosity, a desire to make a difference and an openness to change across their life as a whole. They viewed themselves as developing an identity which incorporated the role of social worker, rather than just learning how to do social work.

This approach had been effective in enabling the students to meet the criteria outlined by the National Occupational Standards (TOPSS 2002) and the code of practice and the more recent demands of the profession as a whole (Laming 2003, 2009; SWTF 2009; SWRB 2010; Munro 2011). The aim of the community placement was to foster these qualities in all students from the start of their degree programme. The remainder of this chapter focuses on my reflections and evaluations of the community placement within my own practice and consideration of its use as a new model of practice learning which is compatible with the proposed Professional Capabilities Framework and proposed 30

days practice learning time to be made available within social work qualifying programmes to focus on skill development (SWRB 2010).

The Community Placement

For the community placement, students are allocated into groups of six to eight and provided with a topic. For the first delivery of the unit (2010), these were:

- The needs of adults who are homeless
- The needs of adults who lack or have limited capacity
- The needs of adult survivors of childhood abuse
- The needs of older people
- The needs of adults experiencing mental health problems
- The needs of carers
- The needs and rights of looked after children
- The needs of children with a visual impairment

Allocations take into account the geographical location of the students (placing them in locality groups to help with self managed study) and previous experiences to ensure that the topic and area of social work practice is relatively new to all members in a group. Allocations are otherwise made randomly. Each group is matched with a topic and a named facilitator. Community facilitators have expertise within the field of the allocated topic either as a practitioner or someone with firsthand experience as a service user or a carer.

Recruitment of facilitators

Social work placements within my own programme are coordinated through a network of local authority, private, voluntary and independent sector organisations. I have drawn on this network to identify placement facilitators who are interested in practice learning but would otherwise be unable to accommodate a student for an 80 or 100 day placement, perhaps due to the size of their organisation or the limitations of the available workload in demonstrating the range of National Occupational Standards for social work (TOPSS 2002). This has led to some dynamic grass roots level organisations coming forward. The ‘needs of carers’ group, for example, is facilitated

by a carer from a local mental health carer's network. The needs of children with a visual impairment is facilitated by a parent of a child with this need who set up her own charity to support others and raise awareness of particular interventions which have supported her son. The needs of adults survivors of childhood abuse is facilitated by a social worker who is also a qualified practice educator and provides counselling services for a charity which offers support to survivors. Engaging community facilitators with firsthand experience draws on the effective use of service user involvement previously explored. Facilitators are provided with training, written guidance and ongoing support throughout the placement period.

In contrast to a more traditional placement, where students are based and take on work within the organisation to demonstrate competence against the National Occupational Standards, the specific learning outcomes of the community placement are for the students to demonstrate:

- Knowledge and understanding of a specific service user group and area of social work practice.
- Awareness of service user and carer perspectives
- The ability to work within the principles and values underpinning social work practice as defined by the National Occupational Standards for Social work.

(Bournemouth University 2010)

As with the principles of UAI, in particular Tally et al's community assessment (2005), students are encouraged to view the context they are exploring as a whole (not just by focussing on the social work role) and to seek to capture the essence of this experience for people who use services. They are encouraged to explore their topic by meeting people, visiting services, reading, identifying the key research issues and seeking to understand the issues faced by a particular group. Whilst students can spend time within the organisation, the majority of their 20 days (completed over an eight week period) is spent exploring the local community and researching their topic. Community facilitators support this learning by facilitating six group sessions during this period. Students and facilitators attend two full day workshops to share their progress, explore issues emerging and to clarify the assessment process.

Two full day workshops

The first workshop is held at the beginning of the placement period. I use this as an opportunity to clarify the unit aims and to encourage students to reflect on their starting point by considering what their first impressions are of the service user group; the images and stereotypes regarding them and what they think they will learn. Students are cautious of admitting to negative views they may have. I find this to be a common experience, as discussed in chapter ten, when considering the ethical implications of challenging a person's values and beliefs as this is embedded into their sense of who they are. It is particularly apparent when being assessed as students are worried about saying the wrong thing (Cranton 2002; Lee and Greene 2003; Lin and Cranton 2005; Grise-Owens et al 2010; Walton 2010). I encourage students to identify the range of stereotypes they are aware of for their allocated topic. This distance from the views being expressed, ensures a safer learning environment from which they are able to explore and reflect. Students were able to acknowledge that stereotypes were likely to have influenced their own views and this formed a catalyst to foster transformative learning, in particular openness to other views and ways of thinking (Mezirow 2000).

I share the concept of transformative learning with the students and the need to reflect on our own thoughts, values and beliefs; the premise on which these are based and how these might impact on our behaviour. I explain Mezirow's view that we assimilate our beliefs from those around us and that unless we question the premise on which our views are based, we cannot assume them to be true or universal beliefs (Mezirow 2003; Lee and Greene 2003). I encourage students to draw on informal and formal knowledge sources such as personal experience, service user stories, media portrayals, practice wisdom as well as research, legislation, policies and literature in order to question these beliefs throughout the practice learning opportunity. The aim is to draw on Mezirow's view of premise reflection occurring as a result of engaging in communicable learning where learners seek to understand experiences (Mezirow 1990, 2003).

The second workshop is at the interim stage and supports the processes of self discovery and exploration the groups are engaged in. The aim is both to foster communicable knowing (Mezirow 2003) through project based learning and to create a safe and supportive learning environment which is conducive to transformative learning (Mezirow and associates 1990; Knowles 1990; Lee and Greene 2003; Cranton and King 2003; Cranton 2006; Grise-Owens 2010; Walton 2010). Groups share obstacles they are

facing and support each other to provide solutions. In recognition of my learning from the participants in the study and the impact that transformative learning had on their lives, I include a 'surviving to thriving' session (Howe et al 2010) to acknowledge and share strategies for managing stress and stressful situations emerging during the practice learning experience. Community facilitators participate in the activity by sharing their own experiences and suggestions.

The workshops are based on strategies developed with the research inquiry (as described in chapter six) and identified within the educational theory chapters (two and three) to enable the students to think for themselves, as opposed to the facilitators and lecturers imparting or imposing knowledge. I encourage students to discover and explore issues and identify their own solutions or responses (Cranton and King 2003). This includes seating the groups around large tables so they can discuss issues and share these with the larger group and by mixing up the groups to facilitate shared learning (Pearson and Somekh 2006). By sharing obstacles and progress, students generated questions from which to reflect further. In the first cohort, a number of groups were having difficulty accessing social work services as social workers were often too busy or did not return their calls. This led to reflection on why this might be; what impact this might have if it was a service user trying to make contact and how they would address this in their own practice. I pose questions to foster further exploration and reflection (Fook 2004; Gould and Baldwin 2004; White et al 2006; Knott and Scragg 2007; Rutter and Brown 2011) such as how adults experiencing mental health problems or those with limited capacity may experience this differently according to their gender, age, culture, sexuality or financial situation. This enables students to consider diversity and the unique experiences of those affected.

Assessment

The community placement is assessed in two ways. The first is a group presentation of learning to the wider student group. The aim is for each student group to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a specific service user group and area of social work practice and an awareness of service user and carer perspectives. Students, lecturers and facilitators observing the presentation can benefit from this learning. The second assessment is based on individual feedback from the community facilitator. Feedback involves confirmation of the number of days completed, attendance and participation in the group sessions; contribution to the

group process and comments on the student's professionalism. Students are required to pass both parts and are awarded a shared mark for their group presentation.

Reflections on the effectiveness of the community placement in fostering the development of the whole person

There were a number of challenges in successfully facilitating the unit for the first time. Student expectations differed enormously and this impacted on the quality of their learning experience. Those who valued the approach to learning and who were organised and pro-active in seeking learning opportunities appeared to gain the most from the unit. Some students did not value the emphasis on self and group managed study. They had expectations about a placement teaching them how to do the job by providing them with tasks to do. One student commented on how we were only using community facilitators because there weren't enough lecturers or qualified social workers to facilitate the groups. I thought this showed a lack of value for the expertise of people with firsthand experience who the student had the opportunity to learn from. This did however demonstrate the effectiveness of the community placement in surfacing issues relating to values and beliefs and the impact of these on the student's behaviour and practice. The student viewed the knowledge and expertise of lecturers and social workers as superior to that of someone with firsthand experience of the issues they were exploring. Concern that the student was not recognising or valuing the expertise of service users was fed back to the student and provided a catalyst for their own critical reflection as well as informing my assessment of their ability to work within the values of the profession.

Some groups focussed on the different experiences students were getting due to the range of approaches or perspectives of the facilitator. A group focussing on the needs of adults who were homeless had contact with many homeless people willing to meet with them to share their experiences through the organisation's drop in. Other groups had limited opportunities to meet with service users such as those focussing on the needs of children. Some groups were facilitated by social workers and the students had relatively easy access to practitioners working within the field they were exploring. Others had to create opportunities themselves. The inconsistencies led to resentment from some individuals about the experience they were getting. In turn, this led to less engagement with the group task and the process of self discovery and exploration, perhaps because

they did not view the learning as purposeful (Knowles 1990). They did not expect to learn much from the unit and as a result, they may not have done.

Some individuals struggled with group dynamics when students demonstrated more commitment than others or where members were perceived as over dominant. Experiences were not dissimilar from those identified earlier in this chapter and are recognised within group work theory explored with the students (Benne and Sheats 1948 group role model cited in Payne 2000; Tuckman's 1965 development of small groups model and Belbin's 1981 model of group roles cited in Keyton 2006 amongst others). Most of the groups drew effectively on their learning from the communication in groupwork unit to manage these dynamics with only minimal intervention from me as the unit leader or from their community facilitator. Groupwork theories enabled students to identify, reflect and seek an understanding of their own roles and behaviour within groups as well as those of others. This does demonstrate the need for students to be supported to develop skills in group and team working and for educators not to assume that this occurs without added input.

The challenges faced within the community placement are consistent with the discussion in chapter three on transformative learning regarding how unsettled students can feel if the learning style does not match their expectations (Lin and Cranton 2005). If students do not feel safe and secure (Mezirow and associates 1990; Knowles 1990; Lee and Greene 2003; Cranton and King 2003; Cranton 2006; Grise-Owens 2010; Walton 2010) or feel that their learning is purposeful (Knowles 1990) then it is unlikely to be an effective learning experience and can create resentment and defensiveness. My response was to explore ways to manage the students' expectations and prepare them more effectively for the experience. These were incorporated into the second delivery of the unit a year later as explored later in this chapter.

Whilst most of the students showed frustration at the difficulty in arranging visits and meetings, some responded by being creative, drawing on the contacts of the facilitator, organisations out of the local area and by thinking more broadly. A group exploring the needs of looked after children visited schools, nurseries and Sure Start centres in addition to social work services. They adopted an approach of attempting to arrange ten meetings in the hope of achieving four or five. This varied greatly from another group

who vented their frustration at the one meeting they had arranged being cancelled due to the social worker being called away.

Sharing experiences within the second workshop day was effective in managing this process. Students were able to share examples of how pro-active they had been which gave ideas and inspiration to those in other groups. A level of competitiveness and the desire not to be left behind seemed to motivate some of the less pro-active individuals, particularly given that this would be exposed when presenting their learning to the whole group at the end of their practice learning experience. Facilitators talked of how they had arranged meetings and shared contacts with the students which enabled the other facilitators to consider how they could do this more.

Practice development – learning from experience

A year later when delivering the unit again to another cohort, I was able to draw on my learning from these challenges. Primarily, I focussed on managing the students' expectations and preparing them for the approach being used. This is based on recognition of the importance of including students in the learning process and managing their expectations (Cranton 2002; Lin and Cranton 2005; Grise-Owens et al 2010; Walton 2010). I was open with the students about what they may like or dislike about the unit based on feedback from last years' students and how the style was very different to what they might be used to. I explained how if they were passive and sat back waiting for work to be given to them, their learning was likely to be minimal (and their mark low). I shared more of my learning regarding educational theory and transformative learning to provide the evidence base and purpose for the unit design and its focus on the use of self and self discovered learning. I emphasised the qualities that we were seeking to nurture such as curiosity and reflexivity and placed these within the context of the recommendations of the Social Work Reform Board and its proposed Professional Capabilities Framework (2010). I encouraged students to immerse themselves in their topic and learn as much as they could.

In managing expectations, I explained that they all had facilitators with different strengths and experiences and it was for them to learn from this perspective and seek ways of gaining alternative view points and knowledge. I drew on examples for each group to demonstrate this point. I explained that the group focussing on homelessness would have the opportunity to meet with many people experiencing this firsthand to significantly increase their own insight and understanding of this experience. I suggested that they may struggle to explore the social work role given that there is not a social work team focussing specifically on homelessness. An area of their learning could be to explore how other social work teams and organisations understand and respond to homelessness and how effectively this is managed. This prepared them for the likely challenges ahead and re-framed these as learning opportunities.

It helped that I was able to share examples of the creative ways previous groups had sought to understand their topic and the perspectives of those with firsthand experience. This gave license to the second cohort to draw on a range of sources outside of social work and to take control over their learning and how best to achieve this.

Outcomes were vastly different from the first year of delivering the unit. On the whole, the groups were more enthusiastic, pro-active and engaged in the process. Four of the community facilitators were recruited from the previous year and new ones were introduced. This created new topics such as adult disability and domestic abuse and seven of the students completed their practice learning through an exchange programme with two universities in Malaysia. Community facilitators who had been involved previously were able to share this expertise. Those who were new offered fresh ideas. I increased the emphasis on learning from people with firsthand experience. This had been valued highly by the majority of students in the previous year and was demonstrated by the participants in this research inquiry as being a catalyst for transformative learning and helping them to critique the effectiveness of interventions and policies. Three of the groups were facilitated by service users or carers and facilitators who were practitioners arranged contacts with people who had used services and who were keen to share their stories.

I was impressed by the range of activities students engaged in to seek an understanding of the topic they were exploring and the impact this could have. Members of the group exploring the needs of homeless adults shadowed outreach workers in the early hours of the morning and two of them signed up and completed 'The Big Sleep out' (Big Issue 2011) where they were sponsored to sleep out overnight in London. This provided many opportunities to meet with rough sleepers and Big Issue vendors to gain insight into the experience of homelessness. Members of the group exploring the needs of adult survivors of childhood abuse were invited to meet with a support group who were willing to share their stories of how they were affected in later life. A group exploring the experience of poor mental health visited a women's prison and discussed with staff the issues affecting the women and the prison services' responses to them. A group exploring domestic abuse had the opportunity to attend a MARAC meeting (multi-agency risk assessment conference as developed by the charity Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA) in partnership with the Home Office) to view the inter-agency response to protecting people experiencing or fleeing domestic abuse. All of the groups were able to meet people with firsthand experience as well as a range of practitioners and organisations. Views and knowledge gained reflected these different perspectives.

When it came to the group presentations, all of the groups demonstrated aspects of transformative learning, critical analysis and relating theory to practice which is not always evident in the first year of the degree. The group exploring homelessness started their presentation with each individual holding up a card with how they had viewed homeless people prior to starting their group work. Statements included “dirty” and “drunk”. Their presentation showed evidence of their learning and transition as they had met people who challenged this preconception or provided insight into why someone might be “dirty” or “drunk”. They reflected on recognising people as individuals, each with their own unique story and set of circumstances. Terminology was considered as they discovered that the term homeless did not only refer to people who were rough sleepers and reflected on how the number of individuals and families affected was far greater that they had realised. Evidence was identified to demonstrate this point. One student commented on how easily it could have been any one of them, demonstrating how they had considered the service user perspective. They articulated knowledge and frustrations regarding political and structural oppression faced by homeless people due to the impact of particular policies and legislation on different individuals and organisations they had encountered. The group ended their presentation by holding up cards of what their views were now of people who were homeless including “resilient”, “resourceful” and “inspiring”. By doing so, they demonstrated Mezirow’s description of transformative learning as developing a frame of reference which is “more inclusive, differentiating, permeable, critically reflective and integrative of experience” (Mezirow 1996, p.163).

The community placement is effective in enabling learners to develop personally and professionally, particularly through transformative learning. By engaging with real people and organisations, students are able to explore issues in ways that are meaningful and purposeful. By removing the focus on the procedural elements of practice learning, students are freed to focus on seeking to understand the wider context whilst still developing knowledge of legislation, policies and models of intervention relevant to social work practice. They have the opportunity to practise a wide range of skills. It seems to prevent the weaker students from limiting their learning to the micro issues of the organisation in which they are placed. Whilst it significantly enhances their knowledge and insight into each topic, it also enhances their skills in exploring, questioning, challenging and reflecting. In the group presentations and evaluations of

the unit students expressed value in the expertise of the facilitators and the people with firsthand experience in helping them to understand the wider issues.

I am mindful that this will not have been achieved by all students. Group members approach their learning experience from different starting points and with different styles. Discussions in chapter three, regarding how transformative learning occurs recognise that student skills in developing insight, critical reflection and analysis differ (Lee and Greene 2003; Merriam 2004; Erickson 2007). Variation, however, is evident in all units across the programme where students who average a Third class degree mark work alongside those who average a First. The nature of groupwork and assessment is that some group members will be carried by stronger members within the group and this has disadvantages, particularly when being awarded a shared group mark. It is for this reason that I advocate that shared marks are only awarded in the first year of the programme when marks do not count toward their final degree classification and only when counter-balanced by an individual piece of assessment. There are benefits of shared learning as previously explored. Emphasis on shared learning and groupwork in the community placement is to enhance the learning experience for students and for them to develop this skill in preparation for social work practice.

The flexible and creative nature of the learning approach within the community placement encourages learners who are pro-active to seek out opportunities that motivate them, potentially engaging more students in the process than more traditional lecturer led teaching and assessment. This was evidenced in the community placement as some sought their learning from hearing firsthand experiences such as through 'the Big Sleep Out' as well as from accessing research and literature. Students were able to explore aspects of their topic which particularly interested or motivated them such as the prison system in relation to mental health; asylum seekers in relation to the rights of the child or male victims in relation to domestic abuse. The model was flexible enough for all of these interests to be developed by the groups and for each learner to take control of their individual learning within a group process. This drew on learning from the research inquiry regarding the need to acknowledge the uniqueness of each individual and their needs, interests and starting points (Scott 1997; Elias 1997; Lee and Greene 2003) whilst also viewing their integrality with their environment and the context in which their learning is taking place (O'Sullivan 2003; Cranton and King 2003; O'Sullivan and Taylor 2004; Lin and Cranton 2005; Merriam and Kim 2008).

Implications for the global context of social work education

Despite the difficulties and challenges presented by the community placement and the strategies discussed earlier in this chapter, I would argue that there is much to gain from developing whole person approaches to learning within social work education. The Reform Board for Social Work in England and Wales is currently proposing a change in how social work practice learning opportunities are provided with the possibility 30 out of the 200 practice learning days focussing on skills development (SWRB 2011). The community placement could be an effective model to meet the recommendations of the SWRB as well as for more global contexts. The model of learning addresses the increased emphasis on critical reflection in social work education and practice (Ringel 2003; Rai 2006; Clare 2007; Harrison 2009; Guransky et al 2010; Lay and McGuire 2010; Wehbi and Straka 2011) and the focus on personal and professional development of students as competent and effective practitioners in accordance with the codes of practice or the HPC's Standards of Proficiency.

When exploring the use of professional skills and working within small groups within the community placement, students identified the following list of key social work skills they developed:

- Leadership
- Clear communication
- Persistence and perseverance
- Diplomacy
- Negotiation
- Applying previous knowledge
- Listening
- Appropriate use of humour
- Building rapport
- Reflection on experience
- Evaluating progress
- Process of elimination – being able to prioritise
- Allowing each person to speak
- Compromise
- Debating issues

- Sharing ideas
- Interviewing
- Teamwork
- Weighing up pros and cons
- Participation (enabling)
- Adapting to make a task work for you and everyone in the group
- Planning
- Being organised
- Facilitation
- Presentation skills
- Public speaking
- Research skills

There is the potential for this range of skills to be developed through the community placement in meaningful and purposeful ways for all learners. Often when discussing the development of social work skills with students, I find that they limit this to a consideration of communication skills. This exercise enabled students to consider the broader range of skills required for social work practice and to identify their strengths and areas for development in these areas.

In relation to the proposed Professional Capabilities Framework (SWRB 2011), the placement presents a range of opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate all nine capabilities. These are demonstrated in **figure 13** which maps the potential of the community placement against each of the proposed professional capabilities for social workers**.**

The design and delivery of the community placement, draws on the learning from this research inquiry and the view that when the whole person is engaged in the learning process, learning transcends context. It supports individuals to develop as autonomous reflective thinkers by fostering curiosity, criticality and reflexivity in all aspects of their lives which in turn enhances their learning in relation to their social work practice. The placement encourages learners to question their relationship with the world by exploring the premise on which their views, values and behaviours are based and the situations

and contexts they are faced with. It seeks to support students to develop skills in processing, responding to and managing complexities. The model accepts that there are

1. **Professionalism**
   Identify and behave as a professional social worker committed to professional development.

2. **Values and ethics**
   Apply social work ethical principles and values to guide professional practice.

3. **Diversity**
   Recognise diversity and apply anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive principles in practice.

4. **Rights, justice and economic wellbeing**
   Advance human rights and promote social justice and economic wellbeing.

5. **Knowledge**
   Apply knowledge of social sciences, law and social work practice theory.

6. **Critical reflection and analysis**
   Apply critical reflection and analysis to inform and provide a rationale for professional decision-making.

7. **Intervention and skills**
   Use judgment and authority to intervene with individuals, families and communities to promote independence, provide support and prevent harm, neglect and abuse.

8. **Contexts and organisations**
   Engage with, inform, and adapt to changing contexts that shape practice. Operate effectively within your own organisational frameworks and contribute to the development of services and organisations. Operate effectively within multi-agency and inter-professional settings.

9. **Professional leadership**
   Take responsibility for the professional learning and development of others through supervision, mentoring, assessing, research, teaching, leadership and management

Figure 13

1. Students conduct their learning within the community within real professional contexts; liaising with a range of practitioners, service users and carers. They are assessed and provided with individual feedback on their professionalism.
2. Students engage in transformative learning as they challenge and reflect on their sometimes unquestioned views, beliefs and values and explore the impact of these on social work practice (their own and others) and the lives of service users and carers. They are required to demonstrate professional social work values whilst working within their allocated group and when conducting themselves within the community.
3. Students explore diversity by communicating and exploring with practitioners, service users, carers and a range of organisations and are supported to make links with wider reading on ADP, AOP and diversity in relation to their topic of exploration. This also applies to the recognition of diversity within the student group and they are supported through the recall days and facilitated sessions to recognise and respond to this.
4. The nature of learning from those directly affected by the issues being explored and drawing on personal experiences motivates students to reflect and consider human rights and their own role in promoting this in their own lives and practice.
5. The focus of the unit on 'making sense' of and 'immersing yourself in the world of', both enables and motivates students to learn as much as possible from a range of sources and by generating different types of knowing as they seek to understand.
6. The real life stories, practice issues and ethical dilemmas that the students are faced with provide a catalyst for critical reflection and analysis as they seek to make sense of the complexities of the topic they are exploring.
7. The unit requires the students to draw on and develop abroad range of skills integral to social work practice. Gaining insight into the experiences people have had of a range of services and interventions also enables them to evaluate the effectiveness of a range of approaches and consider their own strengths and areas for development.
8. The unit is based within the context the student is exploring and will be practicing – the community. Their learning is enhanced by exploring their topic within this context, enabling them to identify and consider the practice issues and the implications of frameworks, structures, policies, guidance and funding and resource implications. They are required to work effectively as a student group; with their community facilitator and with a range of multi-disciplinary organisations and practitioners.
9. Whilst the group work is supported by a community facilitator and the unit leader. Emphasis is on self directed learning and self managed group work. This requires students to take responsibility for their own learning and to support that of their peers.

no single or right answers and that knowledge and situations are continually changing and evolving as is the person themselves. The aim is to equip students to recognise and work within this ever changing context in future practice learning opportunities and throughout their social work career.

Conclusion

Chapter eleven has identified my own pedagogic practice development including the development of a new practice learning unit. I have identified how my learning has generated practical knowing within the context of social work education. This involved drawing on learning and insight gained from this inquiry regarding the experience of social work education for the participants. Students are now encouraged to take a wider, more holistic view of the topic and context they are exploring rather than to restrict this focus to the minutiae of a placement environment. This holistic perspective appears to enable students to develop a broader understanding of the issues people face within a wider context. In turn, this creates a better understanding of the implications for social work and the students' developing practice by enabling the student to discover a range of perspectives and views. The model of practice learning enables learners to develop a more questioning and critical approach to the knowledge they are acquiring and to identify and develop the broad range of skills required of social workers.

Challenges of delivering the unit such as student expectations and group dynamics and my responses to them have been explored to further generate practical knowing. These will continue to form the basis of my critical reflection and self evaluation as I explore my own personal, professional and practice development and the impact on me as a whole. This is the focus of the following chapter.

Chapter 12: Impact of the Doctorate in Professional Practice on me as a whole person.

As identified at the start of this thesis, the professional doctoral journey is one of personal as well as academic and professional development (Bourner et al 2001; Leonard et al 2005; Wellington and Sikes 2006; Fenge 2009; Lee 2009; Carr et al 2010). Recognising personal development is congruent with the approaches to learning explored in chapters two and three (Rogers 1983; Knowles 1984 and Mezirow and associates 1990; Freire 1993) and the findings of this research study which recognise the impact of learning on the whole person and the way they live their lives. Integrality between a person; their capacity to learn and their relationship with the world around them is fundamental to unitary appreciation (Rogers 1990; Cowling 2004b; O'Sullivan and Taylor 2004).

The aim of this final chapter is to express and analyse what impact the doctoral process has had on me and my life. Maintaining a unitary appreciative mindset, I reflect on my learning from the process as a whole including my learning regarding unitary appreciation, whole person approaches to learning, insight gained from the research participants, changes made to my practice, and my own transformative learning. I consider the impact of on my own life and the way I view and engage with the world. In keeping with the unitary appreciative approach, I have created a unitary appreciative profile to express this impact and to help me to analyse this further. This is illustrated in **figure 14.**

Unitary appreciative profile - figure 14

The unitary appreciative profile recognises that all aspects of my life are interrelated and part of a greater whole. Whilst considering a number of ways of representing this experience, I chose to replicate the participants' methods by choosing existing images to use as metaphors for the experience. The images are snapshots of the ever changing and evolving parts of the whole as with the kaleidoscope metaphor used in chapter ten. As images in a kaleidoscope are viewed in different ways, the various components take shape and make links with other parts, forming new shapes and leading to new perceptions. Discussion within this chapter seeks to identify meaning behind the various images and the links and patterns between them.

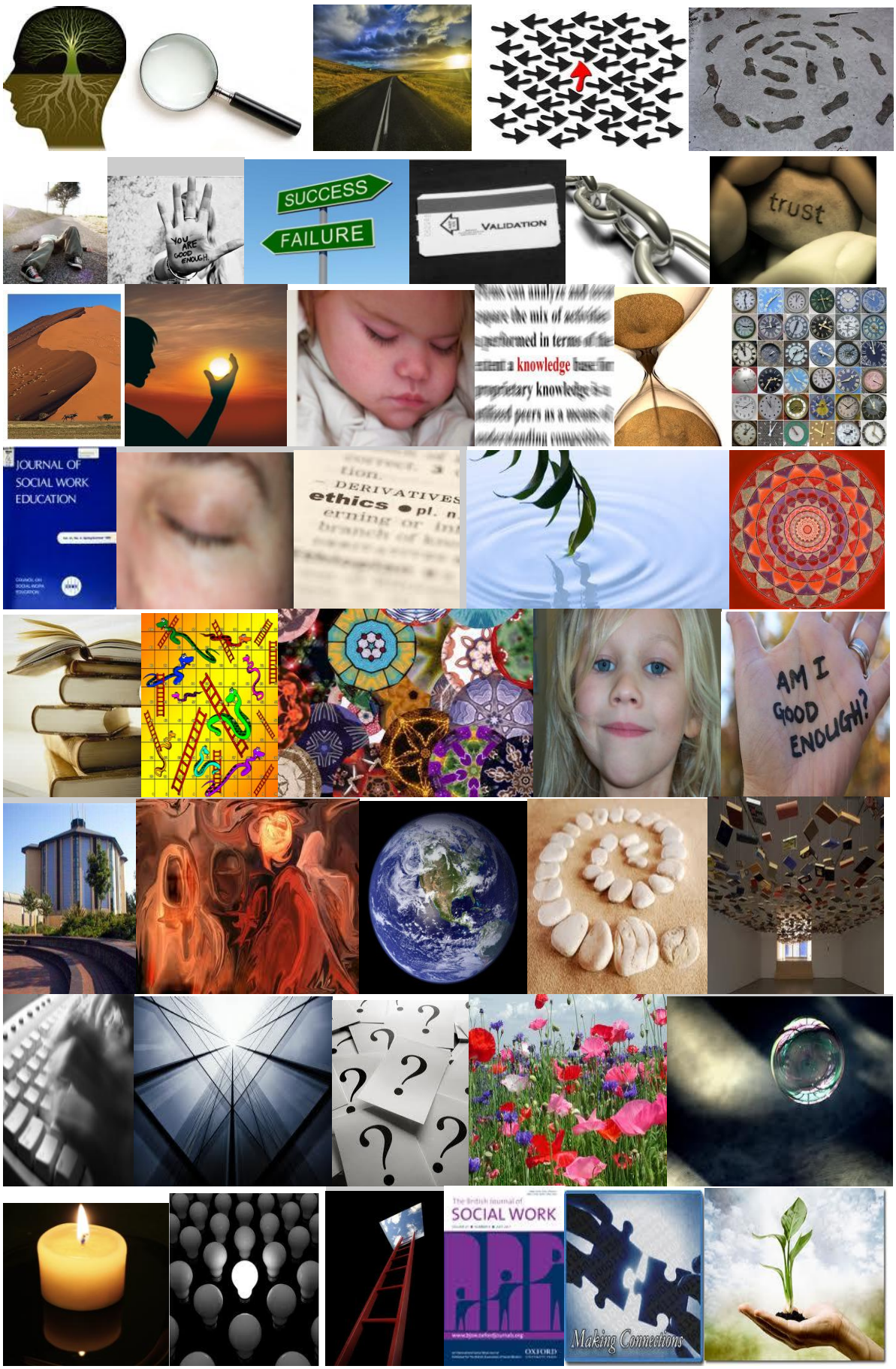


Figure 14: Unitary appreciative profile of a Doctorate in Professional Practice

Representations of the doctoral journey

Some of the images within the profile represent specific aspects of the doctoral experience in a literal way such as the images of my children or the journals which published my first papers (Hughes 2011a, 2011b). Others are metaphors for particular emotions or experiences such as the picture of shifting sands to represent the feelings of uncertainty or the footprints to represent feelings of frustration when 'going round in circles'. Other images represent the need I had to develop self belief and to trust in the process of discovery, by accepting that at times, there would not be a clear answer or sense of direction. As highlighted in chapter four, I explored a range of methods and topics before identifying what it was I wanted to research and how best to do it. Initially the uncertainty felt unsettling but I became more open to exploring in an open ended way and it began to feel liberating. It led to more meaningful learning which was less restricted by my pre-conceptions. I have transferred some of this learning into the design of the community placement as discussed in the previous chapter. Students are encouraged to immerse themselves in the topic and learn all they can rather than having a set of preconceived criteria as defined by someone else. This process of self discovery has become part of how I learn.

My unitary appreciative profile also includes images that represent my learning from the participants. The wild meadow is used to represent the value I place on individuality and difference within a student group and the need to recognise and draw on their unique experiences. Whilst I identified this as fundamental to my practice and professional values at the beginning of the research study, I concluded that I was not doing this enough, or as much as I thought. I place more emphasis now on the use of self within social work practice and the need to develop educative approaches which acknowledge the whole person and their experiences.

I expressed concern within the study that we sometimes lose sight of the individual within higher education. I use the metaphor of 'hot housing' where identical flowers are produced by applying the same conditions to thousands of seeds. Anything not responding in a specific way, within the required timescale is discarded. The wild meadow image better represents my developing approach to education as it values and acknowledges difference and seeks to apply the conditions required by each individual plant. This involves valuing and promoting uniqueness and enabling individuals to develop and grow in a way that best suits them. My aim is to develop more effective

ways of creating a competent workforce where practitioners are able to think for themselves.

I have learnt from the research study, the literature and from reflecting on my own practice, that enabling learners to develop as critically reflective practitioners can be achieved by facilitating processes of self discovery and encouraging curiosity and reflexivity. Learning is made meaningful and purposeful within the context of the person's life. Critical reflection is increasingly important given the current context of reduced resources and higher eligibility for accessing social work services and an increase in the need for social work practitioners to respond to crisis situations and to "think on their feet" (Argyris and Schon 1996, p.21).

Within my profile is an image of a kaleidoscopic pattern. I used this metaphor in chapters ten and eleven to capture the constant change in the learning process. The component parts (beads and glass) are parts of the whole picture and are rotated to create new perspectives and images. This represents my changing knowledge and insight as new information and experiences have been added to the picture.

When playing with this metaphor, I used digital software to change images and photos into a moving kaleidoscope. Unlike a real kaleidoscope, the digital version distorts images, merging them into one, beyond recognition. This provided a metaphor for the uncomfortable process between moments of clarity or confidence where I would grapple with new knowledge and old beliefs before forming a clearer view. It represents the disorientating dilemmas identified by Mezirow (2003) and Cranton (2002) which lead to re-adjustment and re-alignment. I used the more traditional image of the kaleidoscope within the profile. It retains original components (beads and glass) but uses reflection and movement to change the way patterns are viewed. This more effectively reflects my own experience. My core values and beliefs are the same but I view them in a different way.

Representations of personal growth

Another image used within the profile to represent the whole experience is the seedling in the hand. I use the seedling metaphor to express multiple aspects of my experience. It represents the way I view my role and responsibility as an educator and the emphasis I place on nurturing and enabling students to develop and grow into the best they can be

(Rogers 1983). The seedling reflects the fragility of the learning process both for students, as demonstrated within the research study and for me during my own process of learning. It demonstrates the stage I am at in my development as an academic, a researcher and an educator and the growth I perceive to be ahead of me, given the right nurturing and support. Incorporated into this, is my personal growth in relation to self confidence, parenting and my relationship with others.

Self confidence

Leonard et al (2005), in their retrospective study of the motivations of 89 Doctoral students, found that a quarter identified personal development as motivating them to undertake doctoral study. "Pleasure in learning, testing themselves out, proving their ability, gaining confidence, and self fulfilment" (2005, p.138), reflect my own motivations. Whilst it was a requirement of my lecturer post to engage in doctoral study, these personal motivations maintained my enthusiasm throughout the process and shaped the focus of the inquiry.

On becoming a social work lecturer in 2005, I experienced many self doubts as to my competence at this level. I had nine years qualifying experience in social work practice; experience in social work education in practice settings and had been involved in local research. I had no experience of publication. I perceived my colleagues to be more experienced and able than myself. I sought the doctoral route to develop my practice as a more rounded educator, academic and researcher (which I consider to be parts of the same whole) but also to prove to myself that I was 'good enough' for the post. This motivation is not uncommon. Stephenson et al (2006) identify personal and professional credibility as a major benefit reported by successful candidates of Professional Doctorates within their institution.

Achieving a level of credibility has certainly added to my confidence, self belief and self esteem. I have published two papers from my doctoral studies (Hughes 2011a, 2011b), with two more in development and have presented and facilitated workshops at a number of conferences. Disseminating my work has been part of the process of testing myself out (Leonard et al 2005) and in seeking acknowledgment and credibility as an academic and researcher. It has given me the opportunity to hone my skills in relation to conducting a research inquiry and writing papers for journal publication. I have a publishing deal to co-author a book which has created new opportunities for sharing my

learning with others particularly in relation to transformative learning in social work and for expanding my role as an educator. Having tried and found value in the use of UAI, I feel I have sufficient knowledge and experience to engage in a debate into its effectiveness, particularly within the context of social work practice and education (Hughes 2011b).

Areas of self doubt still remain which are represented in my profile by images of 'am I good enough?' and 'you are good enough'. I view self doubt as part of a positive process of identifying areas for ongoing development which lead to improvements in my pedagogic and academic practice. Reflecting on my abilities is part of the process of always discovering and ever developing as a person (as argued by Rogers 1983). It is important to me, for example, to develop a writing style which is open, honest, self reflective and analytical. I am keen to write in a way which is accessible to a wider audience, particularly amongst students and practitioners, who I seek to engage with as an educator and a researcher. I have many doubts however, as to whether my writing style is credible or 'good enough'.

The risks involved of testing myself out at Doctoral level, are that I may not be 'good enough'. This may be based on my own perceptions of requirements at Doctoral level and of what a thesis should look like. It resonates with the participants' expressions within the workshop of the impact of "always being assessed" and the anxiety and self doubt this creates.

Representations shared with the participants' unitary appreciative profile

What I had perhaps not anticipated, to such an extent, were the parallels between my experience and those of the students who participated in the research study. Whilst the area of study was different, there are many similarities with the learning processes and the impact on me as a whole. These are represented in my profile with the images, taken from the digital story, of the tree of knowledge, the long road ahead and exhaustion. Similarities are in the expression of this impact and in the personal stories. Comments from Jessica and Linda resonate particularly with me, when considering what this impact has been and whether this has led to any significant change. Whilst I do not feel that my values have changed, I have a clearer evidence base for my pedagogical views. Increased insight and awareness of the impact of learning on the person and their lives, has made my views stronger. I am more reflective and analytical, partly because

studying has enabled me to create space to be so. In particular, this has led to an increased emphasis on the need to foster criticality, reflexivity and curiosity in others, as opposed to imparting knowledge. I have sought to nurture this in myself, as well as within my practice as an educator. This in turn has led to more self belief and confidence.

Personal confidence and validation, resulting from the knowledge and insight gained, has had the biggest impact on my development as a whole person. I am more comfortable with who I am in a professional capacity and more confident in my role as an educator. Wellington and Sikes (2006) found similar outcomes for the 29 students pursuing professional doctorates who participated in their study. They suggest that impact of the Doctorate in Professional Practice is more to do with personal growth such as growth in respect, confidence and self esteem and becoming more questioning, reflective, analytical and critical, than any specific changes to practice. These are all areas of growth I would identify in myself.

Representations of parenting

A significant area, where my increased knowledge and insight has affected my life outside of education and my professional role, is with regards to my parenting. This is represented by a number of images within my profile. In addition to those of my children and partner, these include the seedling, the clocks, the egg timer, the fragile bubble, keeping the candle burning and the wild flowers.

I have two children, my daughter who was born during the doctoral process who is now three and my son who is now eight. Four years of doctoral study will have been significant for them due to what Leonard et al (2005, p.142) describe as its “constant presence”. Doctoral study has affected both my outlook and my time as a parent. Knowledge and insight regarding the experience of education, for example, has affected my values and beliefs regarding how and what my children learn.

As a social worker, my parenting was guided by my values and the need to foster these in my children. This involved encouraging them to value others, respect difference and to be empathic. On reflection, I have focussed increasingly on fostering qualities such as reflexivity and curiosity within my son, as opposed to evaluating his learning based on what or how much he knows. I place emphasis on the need for him to question

information by encouraging him to ask or to question why. I encourage him to seek to understand an issue or topic and to develop empathy by considering the experience from the perspective of others. I respond to his questions with questions to enable him to explore rather than to impart knowledge or impose my view or version of what is correct or true. My belief is that if he develops a sound value base which is open to the views of others and ability to question, he will be less likely to mindlessly assimilate to the cultural norms around him but to seek ways of being the best he can be (Rogers 1983).

In terms of time, the Doctorate has had to fit in around my family and my work which according to Leonard et al (2005) is becoming an increasingly common situation. At times, this has been difficult to achieve. It has necessitated the requirement and the development of a range of skills in prioritising workloads, managing time and focussing on quality rather than quantity in my roles as a parent, partner, lecturer and student. I have become more creative and disciplined in securing time for each role; and have learnt to manage the process of "plate spinning" the requirements of study, work and parenting, which are common to women students (Wellington and Sikes 2006, p.9).

Representations of my sense of self and my relationship with others

Changes to my parenting; personal growth; a sense of achievement and fulfilment and the improved self confidence as an academic, educator and researcher, have affected my sense of self and my identity, as will the potential award of 'Doctor'. These are represented by images such as the tree of knowledge, the sand dunes, the books and holding the sun. Changes to my sense of self and my relationship with others, has created dissonance. I have sought to capture this in the image of the blurred figures. Whilst in a professional capacity and within my immediate family I am open about the doctoral process and my area of research, this is not the case generally within my life outside of academia. I rarely talk to friends and other family about my Doctorate. I refer to it as my work or my studies, without naming it as a Doctorate. I think this is for a number of reasons. In my family, including extended family, only one of my sisters and I have studied to degree level and I am the only one who has studied to Masters Level. My friendship group is based on old school friends and friends through parenting networks. Very few have a degree or a professional qualification and I worry that focussing on this difference will be perceived as boastful. As a result, I hide my academic and professional achievements. I focus on similarities and seek to adopt the

norms of each friendship or familial group rather than to focus on aspects of my life that differentiates me from others. My experience resonates with Vicky's concerns, expressed within her story, regarding the reactions of friends "back home":

> I think people think 'who does she think she is' just because I've gone to Uni. When I go back home when people ask me how Uni is I don't say it's great or anything because I don't think I can.

On reflection, I recognise that in some part, this may be my perception and not the views of my friends and family. It may well be my reluctance to talk openly about my doctoral studies that discourages others from asking about it. In relation to the impact of the doctoral process on me as a whole person, it is significant. Whilst I recognise that the experience of pursuing a Doctorate has impacted on me, I am not completely comfortable with showing this change.

I am reminded of my discussions within chapter ten regarding my interpretation of the findings. I acknowledged that the process of change and transformation can be difficult and unsettling as the learner seeks to adjust to these changes and to adapt to the impact it has on their lives. This process of adjustment and re-alignment is one that I am engaged in, as I learn to accept my own achievements and my sense of who I am and to feel confident in sharing this with others.

Conclusion

Images and metaphors used within my unitary appreciative profile all have their own story and can be interpreted in different ways. Together, they represent the pattern which captures the whole experience of my doctoral journey. Others viewing the profile may interpret the images and patterns differently. The profile can aid their own reflections on the impact of doctoral study on themselves or on others. My learning throughout this process, with regards to whole person approaches to learning and unitary appreciation, has enabled me to recognise the impact of this learning on my personal development and life outside of my professional role. This broader perspective is intrinsic to the whole person approaches to learning and to UAI, which operate from the premise that the nature of human beings is ireducible and separate parts cannot be understood in isolation. The unitary appreciative profile and my reflections on this, have sought to demonstrate this integrality.

Looking back on the doctoral process so far, I recognise it as positive experience. This is not to say that that it has been easy. There have been many moments of insecurity and self doubt as expressed within the profile and subsequent discussion. Challenges and my ability to deal with them, have led to more meaningful learning and improved outcomes in terms of my understanding and my practice as a researcher and as a lecturer. I value the challenges along with the successes. Insecurity and self doubt are offset by a sense of fulfilment and achievement and the enjoyment of engaging in learning and self discovery. I have viewed my studies as engaging in 'something for me'.

When presenting at a conference, a fellow presenter shared her learning from a Doctorate in Professional Practice and how this had been interrupted by a period of maternity leave. On discussion with her regarding the implications of this, I realised that I was unable at this stage to reflect too deeply on the impact this has had on me. I can identify meaning for me now and recognise patterns that have emerged but I am perhaps too immersed in the experience to step back and see the whole picture. Until completion, this is unlikely to change. This reminded me of Linda, who in her own story said, "now I'm only picking up on little things it will only be when I step away that I might see more changes". I agree.

The final conclusions for this thesis seek to document what the overall meanings and patterns may be and to explore the extent to which the aims and objectives of the study have been met.

Final conclusion of the thesis

As identified within the introduction, this thesis has sought to document my personal, academic and professional development as a result of doctoral study. My aim was for this learning, to inform and enhance my practice as an educator and to develop my professional role and identity, in a way that is underpinned and guided by my personal and professional values. As my learning began to inform my own practice, I wanted to identify ways of contributing to the wider field of social work education by generating new knowledge and models of practice to inform discussion and debate. As the narrative throughout this thesis suggests, this has been achieved on many levels.

My own learning

Learning achieved from the research study exceeded my expectations both in terms of content and process. UAI provided rich data regarding each person's personal and unique experience, as well as their views and reflections on the implications of this for their own lives and developing practice; and for social work education and my own practice. Insight gained, provided a catalyst from which I could further reflect and has significantly affected my practice as a result. I am more aware of the benefits of drawing on a person's life experiences; personal views and values, to enable them to learn in ways which are meaningful and purposeful to them. From this, they can start to incorporate new areas of knowledge and different perspectives. In particular, it has enabled me to develop more holistic approaches to learning and teaching by encouraging students to focus on the broader picture and by fostering criticality, reflexivity, curiosity and autonomous thought, as ways of making sense of situations social workers may encounter.

Creative expression

As hoped, methods used within UAI have been incorporated into my practice. Generating presentational knowing was effective in enabling the participants within the inquiry, to express themselves and to reflect and analyse their experiences. Creative expression is now encouraged within student portfolios such as the use of pictures, poetry and drawings, to express their sense of self. Thought maps (what makes you, you?) are used, to help students to make links between different aspects of their lives; their learning and their practice. Reduced direction regarding the structure and format

of presentations, has enabled students to be more creative in how they express themselves and demonstrate their learning.

Contributing knowledge to the field of social work education

Knowledge generated by the research inquiry and the changes to my practice have also contributed new knowledge to the field of social work education. The first paper I published (Hughes 2011a) focussed on the impact of social work education on a person's well-being. By sharing participant stories, the paper sought to raise awareness of what the impact could be. The paper contributed to the debate on how social work educators could acknowledge and respond to the impact of social work education, both out of a duty of care for students but also as a way of building an emotionally resilient workforce in the future.

The second paper published from this research inquiry, focussed on the use of UAI and explored the potential benefits of its use for researching social work practice and education (Hughes 2011b). This is the first time that the approach has been considered within this field, in either national or international publications. I explore the potential of UAI to provide a research method which is congruent with social work values and can be of direct benefit to the participants of a research inquiry.

Another key area, where I feel that the research study has contributed to new knowledge, is in the development of a skills based model of practice learning for social work (the community placement). My aim is for this to inform discussions on a proposed 30 day skills development component for qualifying social work education nationally (SWRB 2011). Chapter eleven explored how the community placement enables students to develop a wide range of skills essential for social work practice. As programmes throughout the country consider how best to meet this proposed component, this can provide a well evaluated model for consideration.

Contributing knowledge to the development of theory

The research and practice development components have also generated new knowledge to inform theory. I developed the kaleidoscope metaphor to represent the process of transformative learning for the participants of the study, including myself. This challenges the linear processes of transformative learning which dominate the literature in this field. Insight regarding the impact of transformative learning on a person's life

can also contribute knowledge to this discourse and the ways that the learning process is understood.

Study aims

On evaluating the study as a whole, I have continually reviewed the extent to which the original aims have been met. The two aims set out at the start of this thesis were:

- To illuminate the unique experiences of student social workers in relation to the impact that social work education has had on their whole selves, their beliefs, values and behaviour, to inform the development of social work practice and education.

- To develop a model of fostering deep learning, transformational learning and critical reflection through the use of creative media such as storytelling, drawing, photography as forms of both expression and analysis of experience and learning.

The first aim, regarding illuminating experiences, has been the core aim of the research inquiry. This has been achieved due to the whole person standpoint of a unitary appreciative approach and the focus of transformative learning theory on beliefs, values and behaviour. I do not believe there to be any major surprises within the participant stories. Many, within social work education, will acknowledge that the experience can be life changing, as can education generally. Feedback from practitioners and students supports my own view, that as educators, we sometimes lose sight of this. The unitary appreciative profile, including the digital story, serves as a reminder and illuminates the type and extent of the impact of social work education on a person's life. The profile contributes to our overall understanding of the student experience and adds to the debate regarding the role of educators and students in managing this impact and enhancing the learning in a way that facilitates the person's own development and transition into a competent, effective and emotionally resilient social worker. Learning and conclusions regarding the research inquiry are best summarised within the propositional statements in **figures 10 and 11.**

The second aim of the inquiry was to develop a model to foster deep learning, transformative learning and critical reflection. This too has been met but not perhaps in

the way I had anticipated. As the thesis has shown, demonstrated within **figure 12**, there are now a number of strategies, including the community placement, which I have incorporated into my practice and am seeking to promote as effective in social work education generally. With hindsight, I believe the aim to have been too specific. I had assumed that the tools used in the research inquiry such as thought maps, use of visual images and metaphors would be effective and that I would want to roll these out for use with a wider student group. In reality, as reflected on in chapter eleven, the use of these strategies was far wider than creating one model or activity. Fostering criticality, reflexivity and curiosity has become central to my pedagogical approach. I have sought to achieve this through a range of strategies and to encourage learners to take more control in managing how this is achieved through processes of self discovery. The wider contribution to social work education is demonstrated within chapter eleven and summarised within **figures 12 and 13**.

What next?

Whilst the content and process of the research inquiry exceeded my expectations, there are many areas I wish to develop further. I continue to evaluate the development of my practice. Student skills in criticality and reflexivity appear to have increased but it is difficult to compare with students prior to these changes because the conditions are so different. Changes in my practice coincided with a re-validation of the programme which has led to many other changes including the introduction of higher admissions criteria in terms of academic points and experience. Again, this demonstrates the reality of component parts only being understood as parts of the greater whole and the need to recognise it as such.

I would like to continue to explore the learning experience and to promote and explore the effectiveness of approaches for fostering criticality and curiosity in a wider social work education context and within other professional and vocational education. A specific area would be to explore and illuminate processes of fostering criticality and curiosity within social work education and to consider the outcomes for social work practice.

- Are strategies, such as the community placement, effective in fostering criticality, curiosity and transformative learning?
- What impact does criticality and curiosity have on a social worker's practice?

- How does this affect the experience and the outcomes for service users and carers?

A significant area of learning for me has been the use of UAI as a method of gaining insight into an experience or context. This is certainly something I would like to explore further, particularly within social work practice, to illuminate the experiences of those accessing social work services or particular life experiences which can enhance our understanding. My social work practice and teaching experience relates to working with adults such as those with mental health needs or drug and alcohol issues. These are particular experiences where our understanding could be enhanced by enabling people to tell their story, within a variety of contexts and to reflect on the implications for practitioners working in that field. A specific area of interest would be to explore the impact of social work involvement on the lives of drug using parents.

Finally, there is my own personal and professional development and the impact on my life. The doctoral process to date, has increased my own self confidence, enabled me to develop skills, knowledge and insight and enabled me to incorporate the role of researcher into my identity and my sense of self. My feelings at this stage are best captured by Terry from the research inquiry and so the last word goes to him:

> The learning experience as a whole has been so enjoyable. It sorts of gives you a resilience but it is so dammed hard. It really is hard work. When you finish you'll think God I have earned this. It's going to be a bit of a personal milestone to me.

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