

**A SELF-STUDY OF MY ROLE MODELLING
AS A
TEACHER EDUCATOR OF ACCOUNTING PEDAGOGY**

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ABSTRACT

Through this self-study research I explored what I was role modelling for students as a teacher educator of accounting pedagogy in a South African university of technology. My purpose was to align my pedagogical practice with my educational values in order to develop as a more productive role model. My research questions were: *a) What could have influenced my role modelling as a teacher educator of accounting pedagogy? b) What am I role modelling for my students as a teacher educator of accounting pedagogy? and c) How can I develop as a more productive role model?* I used arts-based methods to generate and represent data to answer my research questions. For my first question, I used a personal history approach by recalling specific episodes, people, and places in my life history that could have influenced me in certain ways. For my second and third questions, I videotaped my lectures, reflected on the videotapes, and wrote in my reflective journal. Furthermore, I gathered evidence from students in the form of a reflective questionnaire, metaphor drawings, and the institution's lecturer evaluation surveys. I also had conversations with critical friends and colleagues. I then developed three collage portraits to represent my learning. In constructing this thesis, I used the children's novel, *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett (1969), as a creative nonfiction device. Through the process of going back into my personal history, I was able to confront the demons that haunted my life and caused me to role model in certain ways. Through self-study of my pedagogical practice, I role modelled new ideas and more innovative teaching strategies as I enacted purposeful pedagogies from a social constructivist perspective. Moreover, I learned that I could inspire students by incorporating the arts into my lessons. Overall, through my study, I developed my own living educational theory and in so doing I am on my way to becoming a more productive role model. As my educational values continue to evolve in response to, and in relationship with, my lived experience and significant people in my life, I will be changing and learning.

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CHAPTER ONE: MISTRESS MARY QUITE CONTRARY¹

Refuse to believe

A strange new thing can be done

See—then it is done²

1.1 Riquet à la Houppe³

This self-study research involved an exploration into my pedagogical practice to explore what I was role modelling for my students as a teacher educator of accounting pedagogy in a South African university of technology. I embarked on an exploration of my educational practice because students informed me they were teaching as I taught them. This comment sent me on a path of self-reflection and I became aware that there seemed to be a “living contradiction” (Whitehead, 1989, p. 41) in my pedagogical practice because it appeared that my educational values were not being played out in my teaching activities.

I used the children’s novel, *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett (1969), as a creative nonfiction device in constructing this thesis. I decided to do this because of my long-standing love for this novel and because the fictional life experiences of the protagonist, Mary Lennox, resonated very aptly with my lived experiences. Creative nonfiction is a form of “creative analytical practice (CAP)” that allows a researcher to tell an evocative story that is rooted in research data and also draws on “literary conventions” (Palmer, Cresswell, & Loveday, 2015, p. 1). Or, as Cheney (2001, p. 1) put it, “creative nonfiction tells a story using facts, but uses many of the techniques of fiction for its compelling qualities and emotional vibrancy.”

In the novel, a rich Englishman, Mr. Archibald Craven who is hunchbacked, marries a beautiful lady. On the vast grounds of his home, Mrs. Craven plants a luscious garden with roses and other flowers. Sadly, she falls off a branch of a tree in the garden while expecting a baby. Unfortunately, she dies but not before giving birth to a son, Colin. So devastated is he by her death, that Archibald

¹ “Mistress Mary Quite Contrary” (Burnett, 1969, p. 8).

² “In each century since the beginning of the world, wonderful things have been discovered. In the last century more amazing things were found out than in any century before. In this new century, hundreds of things still more astounding will be brought to light. At first, people refused to believe that a strange new thing can be done, then they begin to hope it can be done, then they see it can be done—then it is done and all the world wonders why it was not done centuries ago” (Burnett, 1969, p. 137).

³ “She had just remembered a French fairy story she had once read called Riquet à la Houppe, about a poor hunchback and a beautiful princess, and it made her suddenly sorry for her uncle Mr. Archibald Craven” (Burnett, 1969, p. 13).

Craven cannot bear to look at his son because he reminds him too much of his wife. After his wife's death, he closes the garden and throws away the key. Archibald Craven is lonely, sad, and bitter and travels widely in an attempt to overcome his grief. However, his life changes when his niece, Mary Lennox, the child of his wife's brother, comes to live at his home after her parents die of cholera in India. Mary discovers the secret locked garden and through the magical energy in the secret garden, she brings life back to the house, the garden, her cousin Colin, and her uncle—and she is transformed from a reserved, selfish, and disliked girl into a happy and lovable young woman.

Before Mary leaves India to go and live with her uncle, she spends a few days in the home of a local family. The children take an instant dislike to her because she refuses to join them in any activity or be friendly towards them. Hence, they tease her—"Mistress Mary, quite contrary." These words are very befitting of Mary's disposition at that point because she feels very contrary to herself. Having lost everything in her life, she is having a surreal experience and feeling rather at odds with herself because she feels she does not belong in a strange home. Hence, I used these words, "Mistress Mary Quite Contrary," as the heading of this first chapter because I, too, was feeling quite contrary when I began my self-study research and started to become aware of a living contradiction in my teacher education practice.

At the first self-study research workshop I attended, conducted by Anastasia Samaras and Mieke Lunenberg in Durban, South Africa in 2012, I learned about haiku poetry. Haiku is a customary type of Japanese poetry. Haiku poems consist of three lines. The beginning and end lines of a haiku have five syllables each, and the middle line has seven syllables. Samaras (2011) further advised that because a haiku poem forces you to be precise and exact in a very short space, it is a useful way to articulate your research topic succinctly to yourself and others. Therefore, in writing this introductory chapter, I identified key words from my favourite paragraph in *The Secret Garden* (see Footnote 2, p. 1). I believe these words represent the main idea that foregrounded my study. From these words, I developed the haiku poem that I used as an introduction to this first chapter to set the creative nonfiction tone for the rest of the thesis.

I repeat the haiku here and explain what each line means to me:

*Refuse to believe
A strange new thing can be done
See—then it is done*

Looking back on my self-study research journey, I can now see how, initially, I refused to believe I was not the perfect accounting pedagogy teacher educator that I thought I was. I can also see how I refused to believe that I could follow through on my desire to adopt an arts-based methodological approach in this self-study. The strange new thing that was done was when I became aware that there seemed to be a “living contradiction” (Whitehead, 1989, p. 41) in my pedagogical practice. Another strange new thing that was done was me reinventing myself and, consequently, my pedagogical practice through the process of an arts-based self-study. After coming to the end of my research journey, I found to my surprise that it could be done and I wondered why it had not been done before.

In *The Secret Garden*, when Mary hears about her uncle’s life story, it reminds her of a delightful story in one of her books, *Riquet à la Houppe*, also known as *Ricky of the Tuft*, a fairy tale in French. In the story,

a fairy gives a hunchback prince named Ricky, the gift of conferring wit upon a pretty but dimwitted princess in exchange for marriage whilst the pretty princess is given the power to change the hunchbacked prince into a handsome prince. (Burnett, 1969, p. 13)

This story, and the enchantment of these words, appealed to me therefore I chose the heading of “Riquet à la Houppe” for this opening section of the chapter to signal my own reinvention through arts-based self-study research.

Following on from this, each chapter in this thesis is titled with a chapter heading or words and phrases from the novel, *The Secret Garden*, that are adapted into chapter headings and subheadings. I chose these chapter headings, words, and phrases to help me express the essence of each chapter in a creative way. I further commenced each chapter with words and phrases from the novel that I developed into poems. In each chapter, I provide an explanation of why I chose those particular words and phrases for the poem. In Chapter Two of this thesis, I explain in more detail my use of poems and the novel as a creative nonfiction device in my research process. In the next section, I provide a brief introduction to the context of my self-study.

1.2 I Did Not Know⁴

The heading I used for this section, “I Did Not Know,” depicts my absolute dismay at discovering that I was not the expert accounting pedagogy teacher educator that I had envisaged myself to be. I can see a similarity to how Mary’s mother in *The Secret Garden*, whom Mary always refers to as “Memsahib,” is utterly shocked before she dies because she had not realised the cholera had spread throughout the area. Mary’s mother is shocked because she always walked around with her head in the clouds thinking that her beauty and her wealth would overcome everything. Likewise, I too was visibly shocked to hear that there was a problem with my pedagogical practice because I had walked around with my head in the clouds thinking I was the best accounting pedagogy teacher educator, and that there was absolutely no problem with my pedagogy.

My doctoral journey began in 2011—with a concern about my professional practice as a teacher educator of accounting pedagogy at the school of education at a university of technology in the Pietermaritzburg area of the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Accounting pedagogy is the adapting of accounting instructional theory to the “distinctive nature, structure and epistemology of the subject in a formal situation” (Rossouw, 2002, p. 6). Simply, this means putting accounting theory into practice in a classroom context. My concern came about as a result of students’ poor academic performance in the subject. I was also concerned that students were receiving negative comments from their mentor teachers at the schools where they were conducting their teaching practice. Mentor teachers are those qualified and experienced teachers under whose guidance and supervision student teachers prepare and present lessons during their teaching practice sessions. Teaching practice is the period that student teachers spend at schools where they are expected to put the theory into practice. During this period, they teach learners⁵ and are observed and assessed by mentor teachers and their subject lecturers.

I am a teacher educator on a Bachelor of Education degree programme, which is a 4-year degree with 480 credits. The degree is divided into three specialisations namely, economic and management sciences, natural sciences, and technology. I teach in the economic and management sciences specialisation. In 2008, I was employed at the university of technology in a permanent capacity as an accounting teacher educator to lecture accounting education to student teachers from first year to third year. My experience as a teacher educator gave me the understanding that for student teachers

⁴ “I did not know!” the Memsahib cried” (Burnett, 1969, p. 3).

⁵ In the South African context, *learners*, refers to those who are still at school while *students*, refers to those who are involved in post- school education studies.

to develop into “learning specialists” in their specific fields of expertise, not only must they acquire substantial subject content knowledge, but they must be able to convey this content knowledge in a meaningful way to learners in the classroom (Shulman, 1987, p. 3). Shulman (1987, p. 2) termed this knowledge of how to teach as “pedagogical knowledge.” At the institution where I am employed, the pedagogical knowledge that students have to acquire in my subject, accounting education, is covered in the subject of accounting pedagogy.

Prior to my appointment in 2008 as a teacher educator, the accounting education students had received no instruction in accounting pedagogy. However, I wanted to make a difference because I had mentored many student teachers who came to conduct their teaching practice at the schools where I had taught as a high school teacher. From my experience, I had learnt that many of these student teachers acutely lacked pedagogical knowledge. Hence, I began teaching accounting pedagogy as part of the second- and third-year accounting education curriculum. I redesigned the examination paper for second- and third-year accounting education students to 75% percent pure accounting content, which I called Section A, and 25% accounting pedagogy, which I called Section B. However, to my surprise, when students first wrote this examination, I noticed a decline in the students’ marks. At the end of 2008, I recorded in my examiner’s reports that the decline in the examination performance of the students was because it was the first time that the students had an accounting pedagogy section in the examination paper.

Nevertheless, at the end of the second year, 2009, students’ examination performance had declined even further. At the end of 2010, this became a cause for concern and I was instructed by the head of department to explore the reasons for the decline. I started with the examination papers from the previous two years, 2008 and 2009. I critically examined both papers and that current year’s 2010 paper to try to identify any patterns or common areas of poor performance. Because I did not have the students’ marked scripts, I used the diagnostic analysis for each question. At the university, on completion of every formal examination, the examiner has to complete a diagnostic analysis of the examination paper. This means that the examiner examines each question and records the performance of the students in that question. The examiner then analyses possible reasons for poor performance in discussion with the examination committee of the school of education.

After intense scrutiny, I could see that in all three years’ diagnostic analysis, students were performing poorly in the 25% Section B on accounting pedagogy. Even those students who excelled in Section A on the pure accounting content were performing poorly in Section B. I went on to

discuss with the students their poor examination performance. These were some of the responses from students that caught my attention:

You told us about learner-centred teaching, but you lecture to us, we do not know how to implement learner-centred teaching.

You gave us lots of notes on the different teaching strategies and methods but you never showed us how to put it into practice, we just read the notes in class.

You are our lecturer, you are supposed to show us how to do these things, giving us notes and testing us on those notes in the examinations is not helping us.

The mentors at school, they say they are not our lecturers, they cannot teach us these things. We must learn it at the university. (Personal journal, May 2011)

Whilst undertaking my review of the students' poor examination performance, I went a step further and looked at the teaching practice files that the students compile every year during the teaching practice session. I did this because I anticipated that what students learned in accounting pedagogy would have impacted on their performance in the classroom during the teaching practice sessions.

In reviewing the teaching practice files, I noted many negative comments from the mentor teachers at schools where student teachers did their teaching practice. For example:

Students have good command of their subject content but have difficulty in transferring this knowledge to the learners effectively—they are book smart.

Students cannot reflect critically on their teaching experiences.

Too teacher-centred.

Lessons are mundane, boring and lifeless. (Teaching Practice files, May 2011)

I then conducted an informal discussion with the second- and third-year cohorts of accounting pedagogy students about these comments. Many students cited school-related reasons such as lack of resources in the schools, while others claimed that their mentor teachers were not helpful and left them to their own devices. However, a number of students also commented on my pedagogy. For me, the most thought-provoking of these comments was, "We teach like how you teach us." Looking back, I can see that I felt shattered on hearing this because I had had a glorified vision of myself as the expert accounting pedagogy teacher educator.

1.3 She'll Have to Alter a Good Deal⁶

As the heading “She'll Have to Alter a Good Deal” of this section articulates, I started to realise that I would have to alter a great deal if I wanted to improve my practice—just as Mrs. Medlock, the housekeeper in *The Secret Garden* observes that Mary will have to alter a great deal if she wants to fit in at her new home. I had to alter a great deal because I had to align my educational beliefs with my teaching activities as Mary had to align her behaviour to suit her new living environment.

The responses from the accounting pedagogy students prompted me to take some time to reflect on my practice and my educational values and beliefs. In my mind, I firmly believed I was enacting certain behaviours consistent with the teaching beliefs and values of a student-centred teacher educator. However, when I compared these teaching values and beliefs with what students told me about my teaching, it seemed that my teaching activities were in direct contrast with what I thought were my student-centred teaching beliefs and values.

Whitehead (1989, p. 41) pointed out that when the educational values that you subscribe to are not evident in your teaching activities, it shows a “living contradiction” that can serve as a catalyst for self-study research. Researchers such as Menges (1994) claimed that one essential way for teacher educators to improve their practice was for them to make sure their teaching beliefs were demonstrated in their actions in the classroom. Furthermore, Russell (as cited in Loughran & Russell, 2013) explained that teacher educators who became aware of this contradiction and wished to narrow it, were likely to be attracted by the research methodologies of self-study of teacher education practice.

When I discussed my realisations with my colleagues and friends, I was encouraged to pursue a doctoral study. I was referred to my present research supervisor, Professor Kathleen Pithouse-Morgan, who inducted me into the realm of self-study research. In discussions with my supervisor about self-study of my practice, I made the decision to explore my role modelling as a teacher educator of accounting pedagogy. To deepen my understanding, I consulted relevant literature on role modelling of teacher educators. From my readings, I began to understand role modelling as intentional and unintentional behaviours and actions by teacher educators, which they display in enacting their roles as teacher educators (Lunenberg, Korthagen, & Swennen, 2007).

⁶ “She'll have to alter a good deal, answered Mrs. Medlock” (Burnett, 1969, p. 10).

Moreover, I read that role modelling is important in teacher education because student teachers learn more by what teacher educators do than by what they say (Lunenberg et al., 2007). Lanier and Little (as cited in Lunenberg et al., 2007, p. 588) reinforced this claim by suggesting “the way teacher educators model the promotion of certain views of learning could be a more important factor in shaping teacher behaviour than the content of the messages they are sending.” Furthermore, Lunenberg, et al. (2007) added that teacher educators sometimes model behaviours that they are not aware of. Consequently, after engaging with the readings and consulting with my supervisor, I finalised my decision to focus my self-study research on what I was role modelling for my students in accounting pedagogy. In the next section, I illustrate my first learnings about self-study research.

1.4 It’s Time to Open Your Eyes⁷

The title “It’s Time to Open your Eyes” that I gave to this section was extracted from the novel, *The Secret Garden*. These words are uttered by the housekeeper Mrs. Medlock when she and Mary arrive at the train station in the middle of the night to go to her uncle’s home. These words are indicative of my eyes being opened by my first learnings about self-study research. The first text I consulted on self-study research was by Samaras (2011) and I was immediately comforted when I read her words, “What questions have you been asking yourself lately about your teaching? What do you want to better understand?” (p. 5). These words were music to my ears because I had pressing questions about my teaching. I was relieved but excited when Samaras (2011) informed me further that self-study research would allow me to critically examine my practice and thereby give me new insights into my teaching with the aim of transforming my teaching practice. Mitchell and Weber (1999) termed this transformation “reinvention” (p. 231). My understanding is that they meant when you study your practice through self-study you reinvent yourself and, in so doing, not only improve your pedagogic practice but also “wrap [your] imagination around a different image of [yourself] in action” (p. 232).

From my reading, I also became aware that although my self-study research would encompass practice-focused research in which I would try out new ways of teaching as “purposeful pedagogies” (Samaras, 2011, p. 136), self-study research could also focus on the ways I was growing and developing personally and professionally. Thus, my self-study research would not focus solely on my educational practice or solely on me as the teacher educator. Instead, it would focus on me in relation to my educational practice (LaBoskey, 2004). In Chapter Two, I provide a detailed

⁷ ““You have had a sleep!’ she said. ‘It’s time to open your eyes!’” (Burnett, 1969, p. 15).

exposition of my understanding of self-study research. Next, I elucidate the theoretical lens that I adopted to better understand the key concepts that emerged in this study.

1.5 The Curtain Has Been Drawn⁸

The heading “The Curtain Has Been Drawn” is taken from *The Secret Garden* when Colin questions his cousin Mary about the curtains being drawn back in his room. These curtains cover a framed portrait of his mother. He always kept the curtains closed because when he had opened them, he felt that his mother was laughing at him. Nevertheless, after his visits to the secret garden, Colin feels one night that magic is filling his room with such radiance that he cannot sleep. He gets out of the bed and opens the curtains to reveal his mother’s portrait. He quite likes it and wants to keep the curtains open forever. Likewise, I realised that I had always kept the curtains closed on my pedagogy and, because I believed that I was the expert teacher educator, I never questioned myself on whether I was doing the right thing. Like Colin, I also felt the magic surrounding me when I discovered a theoretical lens to help me see more clearly in my study.

It was only when I thought deeply about the purposeful pedagogies I wanted to enact with my students, that I realised that these strategies lent themselves to a social constructivist understanding of teaching and learning. So I consulted literature to learn more about social constructivism. Samaras (2010) enlightened me that Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934), a renowned Russian developmental psychologist, was at the forefront of the discovery and expansion of social constructivism. According to Samaras, Vygotsky believed that the development of human beings is influenced by their involvement in a particular social environment in which they find themselves. Vygotsky (as cited in Rieber & Robinson, 2004) indicated that human development “unfolds in the context of real-life activities and the child’s development changes as they are exposed to the changing demands of social life” (p. 510).

Vygotsky (as cited in Daniels, 2001, p. 57) elaborated that the “actual developmental level” was reached when a person engaged in “individual problem-solving” but that a higher level of development called the zone of proximal development (ZPD) was possible when an individual engaged in solving problems with the help of an adult or a more “capable peer.” I interpreted this to

⁸ “You are wondering why the curtain is drawn back, I am going to keep it like that” (Burnett, 1969, p. 218).

mean that humans build on their existing knowledge base, and acquire new meaningful knowledge from others with whom they interact with in their social environment—hence the birth of the term *social constructivism*. McMahon (1997) concurred that human learning is a social process because learning does not only take place inside the person’s head, nor do humans sit back quietly and acquire knowledge that changes their behaviour. McMahon (1997) explained that something that is worthy of being learnt is more likely to be learned when humans actively participate with each other in a social setting.

Schunk (2012) concurred with McMahon (1997) that knowledge acquisition cannot solely be attributed to an external stimulus or the internal functioning of an individual’s mind but, rather, knowledge is acquired when people disagree with each other, engage in meaningful dialogue to sort out their disagreements, and then arrive at a common understanding within a specific social setting. Similarly, Draper (2013) agreed that learning occurs when “real-life adaptive problem-solving” (p. 2) takes place through engagement with others in a particular social context. McKinley (2015) also maintained that humans grow and develop and acquire knowledge socially through their interactions with others in their social environments.

I was delighted by Khalid and Azeem (2012) who suggested that using a social constructivist approach in the teaching of Bachelor of Education degree students is a desirable approach because constructivism involves engaging these students actively in interesting and original activities. In my opinion, I anticipated that student teachers would then be encouraged to similarly utilise the same innovative and creative activities with their own learners at the schools.

Nevertheless, from my reading, I also learned that, while as early as the 1980s, social constructivism was becoming popular in teacher education programmes, a living contradiction was that student teachers were often not displaying the characteristics of social constructivism in their teaching (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981). Zeichner and Tabachnick added, further, that one of the reasons cited for this was that their teacher educators were not modelling the principles of social constructivist theory for student teachers in the classroom.

From my reading of Hussain and Sultan (2010), I became aware that in order to model a social constructivist approach in my teaching, I would be aiming to inculcate both academic and social learning among my students, thus enabling them to live and work in the 21st century. Similarly, Hussain (2012) put forward the idea that in a traditional classroom, the teacher educator plays the main role in the learning process to passive students but, in a social constructivist class, the students

take much delight and confidence in becoming the main role players. Moreover, I was interested in the idea that knowledge can be socially constructed by rich dialogue and exchange of ideas (Putnam and Borko, 2000).

I anticipated that a social constructivist environment would equip my students with intellectual perceptiveness, rational thinking, and investigative skills (Li, 2001). Li emphasised that students, when equipped with such capacities, can be able to build on their prior experiences in the learning process and thereby assimilate new knowledge. Dhindsa and Emran (2006) revealed that new knowledge is built upon careful studying, thinking about, and taking part in the surrounding environment with other students, teacher educators, and the available technology.

I was inspired by Hussain and Mahmood (2010) who proposed that efficient education can be directly linked with efficient teaching. In a study undertaken by Hussain (2012) on the effects of adopting a social constructivist approach in a learning environment, he found that students took much joy from involving themselves with other students and working together and sharing their skills with others in the classroom. He explained that this provided more avenues of acquiring knowledge while at the same time assisted students to come to terms with diversity in the classroom.

Marshall, McCrea, and Hillery (2014) described social constructivism as a teaching strategy that uses the diverse expertise of individuals within a group to construct knowledge. According to this strategy, differences within a group provide numerous perspectives and explanations of the same content, leading to better overall understanding of the content. Pratton and Hales (2015) found, in their study, that students who were active participants in the learning process achieved higher scores in assessments than those who attended the traditional lectures. Pratton and Hales also observed that the students who participated in seminars and debates and shared their thoughts and ideas finally arrived at sound conclusions by themselves.

Accordingly, having read and reflected, I accepted that a social constructivist classroom would call for a reconsideration of my role modelling. Furthermore, WNET Education (2004) alerted me that relationships would have to change from supervision and control to guidance and support. I would have to give up the expert role to become a facilitator. However, it was important to take note that in a social constructivist classroom, my presence as the teacher educator would not be diminished—rather, it would be heightened because students needed to be guided through the learning process

(WNET Education, 2004). Bearing all of this in mind, in the next section, I demonstrate how I constructed my research questions and how I responded to each question.

1.6 To Prepare You⁹

The title “To Prepare You,” are the words Mrs. Medlock, the housekeeper in the novel, uses, to prepare Mary for what to expect at her new home. These words remind me of how I prepared myself for my actual research process by constructing my guiding research questions.

When I began my doctoral research, I read widely about self-study research and I knew that I had to author my own research questions—which should emerge from my experiences and observations of what happened in my classroom (Samaras, 2011). As I tried to formulate appropriate research questions, I toyed with various research questions and had conversations with my supervisor as well as my colleagues and fellow doctoral students. After much deliberation and exchange of ideas, I was encouraged to think carefully about the focus and rationale of my research study and derive my questions from there. In self-study practitioner research, finding a research topic is not reliant on identifying a gap in the research literature because the research question often emerges from a practitioner’s commitment to improving practice (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). I managed to formulate three research questions that I believed would provide a structure for my study.

My first research question is: “What could have influenced my role modelling as a teacher educator of accounting pedagogy?” As explained further in Chapter Three, responding to this question involved me undertaking a journey into my personal history (Samaras, Hicks, & Berger, 2004). I divided my data generation for this question into different phases of my life. I first explored my childhood experiences from birth, which I spoke to my mother and other family members about. I asked my family for photographs to help me concoct a visual image of my childhood. This helped me to piece together and recreate a personal history narrative account of my childhood (Chapter Three) and primary school years (Chapter Four).

Writing about my happy high school years and the positive impact my English teacher had on me (see Chapter Five) elated me. In writing about my early professional career and then my role as a wife and mother and the profound events that characterised this period in my life (see Chapter Six), I was able to chain together these events of who I was at that point in time. Photographs and artefacts were gathered from family and friends and were woven into my personal history narrative. I created

⁹ “I suppose you might as well be told something—to prepare you. You are going to a queer place, said Mrs. Medlock” (Burnett, 1969, p. 12).

a collage portrait to “depict [my personal history narrative]” (Gerstenblatt, 2013, p. 304) in a new form (see Chapter Two), and I wrote a paper about this collage portrait that I presented in 2014 at an international self-study research conference (Hiralaal, 2014).

My second research question is: “What am I role modelling for my students as a teacher educator of accounting pedagogy?”

My third research question is: “How can I develop as a more productive role model?”

In showing how I responded to Research Question Two and Research Question Three, I provide a combined discussion because it emerged during my study that exploring what I was role modelling, and how I could develop as a more productive role model, happened together.

In order for me to develop as a more productive role model, I needed to explore what I was role modelling. Therefore, as explained in Chapter Two, in response to Question Two, I videotaped my lectures and watched these videotapes repeatedly to spot some clues that would enlighten me on my role modelling. In addition, as demonstrated in Chapters Seven and Eight, I engaged in discussions with students and colleagues about my instructional activities to gain more insight into what I was role modelling. I asked students to provide comments on my teaching after their lectures with me. I collected these comments after every lecture and thoroughly analysed them by looking for common themes that would highlight what I role modelled. I also generated data from the university annual lecturer evaluation survey that students complete every year. In addition, I gave students a reflective questionnaire to complete on the negative and positive experiences they had had in the accounting pedagogy lessons. I further engaged students in an exercise where I asked them to identify a metaphor that best described me as their lecturer and draw this metaphor—as described in Chapter Seven. I had hoped that their experiences would shed light on my role modelling as their lecturer.

As shown in Chapter Two, I went on to create a collage portrait to convey my overall learning in response to my second research question by “weaving together words and images” (Gerstenblatt, 2013, p. 304). I made the collage portrait available to my self-study cohort group (as explained in Chapter Two) for scrutiny and advice and audio recorded their responses. I also reflected on the self-study cohort group members’ responses and wrote a paper that I presented in 2016 at a national university teaching and learning conference (Hiralaal, 2016).

In attempting to improve my practice and thereby develop as a more productive role model, I aimed at enacting purposeful pedagogies by adopting a social constructivist approach in my accounting

pedagogy classroom. As described in Chapter Two, I videotaped my lectures for a period of six months (see Chapter Seven and Chapter Eight). I watched the videotapes repeatedly and recorded my reflections on these videotapes in my reflective journal. Additionally, I generated data through my teaching practice, which included students' reflections on my teaching, conversations with fellow doctoral students in the self-study cohort group, and discussions with colleagues in my teaching context. Also, I developed a metaphor for a nodal moment I encountered in my teaching, and converted the entire experience into a paper, which I presented in 2015 at a national university teaching and learning conference (Hiralaal, 2015). I also compiled a collage portrait to represent my overall learning in response to Question Three (see Chapter Two). Next, I discuss the key concepts that arose from this study.

1.7 I Know It Was Magic¹⁰

I have used the words, "I Know It Was Magic" as a heading for this section because in *The Secret Garden*, when the robin directs Mary to the keys of the secret garden with his twittering and chirping, Mary believes that it is magic that sent the bird to her. I, too, felt that the magic was working on me as I gained a deeper understanding of the key concepts that emerged from this study and the social constructivist theoretical lens through which I viewed these key concepts.

1.7.1 Understanding Accounting Pedagogy From a Social Constructivist Perspective

Pedagogical content knowledge or, as it is called at the institution where I teach, accounting pedagogy "is that special combination of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the domain of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding" (Shulman, 1987, p. 8). Hence, preservice teacher programmes should prepare accounting teachers to be knowledgeable in their subject content whilst at the same time be responsible, be able to make teaching interesting, encourage and facilitate independent thought in students, have good communication skills, be prepared and organised, and present lessons in an orderly manner (Xiao & Dyson, 1999). Therefore, I should equip student teachers to be experts in their subject field and also to teach the content of their subject field in a way that motivates learners to study (Borko, 2004; Clifford, 2008).

Cooper, McCombie, and Rudkin (2002, pp. 20–21) used a model of three worlds to explain the pedagogical approaches that preservice Accounting teachers are exposed to during their training:

¹⁰ "I Know It Was Magic" (Burnett, 1969, p. 178).

“World 1: Habitual, seeking comfort in the familiar.”

Cooper et al. (2002) suggested that many accounting teachers experience World 1 during their studies, where the teacher and the learner are seen as two distinct entities. In this world, the emphasis is on processes and procedures with little or no reference to how these procedures could change over time. The theory of knowledge of this world is that accounting knowledge is seen as being separate from the student who is acquiring the knowledge.

“World 2: Explaining the familiar.”

In this world, the teaching of accounting focuses on learners’ ability to perceive concepts as related to each other—and involves understanding and re-understanding concepts. This allows students to learn in a manner that is of a high standard so that they understand the difficult and confusing accounting concepts. Teaching and learning in this world uses a social constructivist approach. Learners are encouraged to interact with each other and share their understandings with each other. The class works towards re-understanding after their interactions with each other.

“World 3: Disturbing the familiar.”

In this world, accounting knowledge is an individual and diverse assembly of learners, teachers, and their different contexts. This world goes beyond World 2 because it does not only attempt to understand accounting practice but also recognises that accounting has an ethical aspect. It has the ability to change the world. Pedagogies in this world encourage students to personally engage with the material, take cognisance of the ethical aspects of accounting, and embrace the complexities of effectively teaching difficult and abstract theoretical accounting concepts and the ability to link this theory to its practical professional application of accounting. Cooper et al. (2002) reported that learners taught in this world find the subject intellectually stimulating and one in which critical thought is encouraged.

Hence, from my reading, I understand that in my social constructivist accounting pedagogy class, I should ensure student teachers become familiar with the pedagogies that encourage deep meaning making, in-depth strategies for learning, rational open-minded thinking, self-questioning, acceptance of ambiguity, and an inclination to bring about change.

The prescribed accounting curriculum for South African schools requires that 10 percent of all examinations include “problem-solving questions using critical and creative thinking” (Department of Basic Education [DBE], 2012, p. 44). Hence, it is important for me to gear the student teachers’ teaching and learning towards developing critical and creative thinking by engaging them in

problem-solving activities. Zraa, Kavanagh, and Hartle (2011) argued that, largely because technology has comprehensively changed the role of accountants from a technical task to one that is more client friendly, teaching and learning of accounting needs to adjust accordingly in order to meet the challenges of this new role. Consequently, pressure has been placed on teacher education institutions to change the accounting education curriculum from a constricted and inflexible curriculum that places emphasis on official bookkeeping competencies, to emphasising capacities such as social interaction between people and flexibility in thinking (Healy & McCutcheon, 2008).

Borko (2004) suggested that in order to promote learners' conceptual understanding, teachers should have a deep and adaptable knowledge of the subject they teach. Accounting is no different—particularly because it is a highly specialised discipline, one that changes with technological and developmental changes in practice. Likewise, Mohidin, Jaidi, Sang, and Osman (2009) proposed that because accounting is a highly skilled subject, it is essential that teachers of the subject are prepared during their training with the complex knowledge and skills required.

From my readings on social constructivism, I gathered that when teaching accounting pedagogy from a social constructivist perspective, I must not be viewed as the content expert and the source of all answers, but as a participant in the learning process who might not know it all but desires to learn in collaboration with students. Rather than being seen as the primary source of information, I could be seen as a support “collaborator or a coach for students as they gather and evaluate information for themselves” (Jonassen, 1991, pp. 5–6). My role should be that of a facilitator of learning because the social constructivist teacher educator actively encourages students to develop and formulate their own questions and work with their peers to explore alternate ways of finding the answers to their questions.

Instead of passively waiting for me to give all the answers because they assume I know all the answers, students in a social constructivist accounting pedagogy classroom can work with other students and search for information to enhance their learning experiences. They can find out what is needed and search for ways to attain it. In this way, students can act as co-contributors of the knowledge. This can be done by collaborating with each other in exploring, discovering, and creating unique solutions to learning problems. Students should therefore regard me as a “resource model, a helper who encourages exploration and attempts to find unique solutions to problems” (Jonassen, 1991, pp. 2–6).

Rather than dividing the learning content into various little segments and seeing it from a single perspective, in a social constructive accounting pedagogy classroom, I should present the learning content as being an integration of knowledge relevant to students' contexts and connected to real-life situations. It is imperative that I do not oversimplify single representations of reality but provide multiple representations of reality that reflect the complexity of reality. Rather than too much emphasis on abstract instruction, the focus should be on authentic tasks in a meaningful collaborative environment. Real-world settings and case-based learning are preferred over predetermined sequences of instruction (Jonassen, 1991).

1.7.2 Understanding Role Modelling From a Social Constructivist Perspective

Korthagen and Lunenberg (2004) suggested that whilst there has been much research undertaken since the 1980s on teacher educators, the research focused more on their research publications and the developments of the prescribed curriculum instead of their pedagogical practices. They attributed this to the fact that not much was known at that time about teacher educators' practices, although they were deemed to be responsible for the quality of teachers they produced.

Regardless of the content of teacher education programmes, student teachers are likely to be influenced by the ideologies and practices of their teacher educators (Izadinia, 2012). Hence, teacher educators through their role modelling can instil a sense of power and agency in student teachers so that they grow into responsible and caring individuals. Teacher educators' words, behaviour, teaching styles, and practices shape student teachers' present and future professional lives and influence who they are and who they become (Izadinia, 2012).

Clarke (1994) highlighted the significance of teacher educators modelling the linking of theory to practice because this would draw attention to teacher educators' reflection and action on teaching. In this way, student teachers can see what it is like to reflect on their own teaching activities and realise that they are not only learning from their teacher educators' teaching but, rather, from their reflection on their own experiences. Hence, student teachers can develop their own professional knowledge (Clark, 1994). Korthagen, Loughran, and Russell (2006) expanded on this view by pointing out that merely telling students about the pedagogical approaches and theory of teaching will not sufficiently prepare them for the rigours of actual classrooms. Instead, Korthagen et al. recommended that there should be a balance between theory and practical implementation of the theory in a classroom situation. In my understanding, this means student teachers should submerge

themselves and genuinely engage in actual practical classroom teaching whilst at the same time drawing on the theoretical underpinnings of their teaching training programme.

Korthagen et al. (2006) argued that when teaching student teachers about teaching, it is imperative that teacher educators model the teaching strategies that they teach about in their lessons. Korthagen et al. clearly admonished teacher educators who do not give students explanations on why they are using a specific method or strategy in their teaching. Likewise, Kosnik (2003) argued that if teacher educators themselves do not experience what they are teaching their student teachers, then the student teachers will not be able to deeply comprehend and gain from this lesson. Loughran and Berry (2005) claimed that when teacher educators model the “thoughts and actions” underpinning their practice, this leads to “more powerful teaching and learning about teaching” (p. 197). Loughran and Berry further articulated that because teacher educators are at the pinnacle of gaining in-depth understanding of teaching about teaching, it is imperative for them to model this in-depth understanding for others, namely, their students.

Loughran (as cited in Korthagen et al., 2006) suggested that it is of primary significance for student teachers to be explicitly told by their teacher educators what and how they intend teaching. Loughran believed that teacher educators’ role modelling is not enough to equip student teachers to tackle the challenges that teaching poses as well as teach in an effective manner. Similarly, Lunenberg et al. (2007) pointed out that student teachers do not learn enough from the examples implicitly role modelled by their teacher educators because they often do not actually see these examples. Clearly enough, Loughran and Berry (2005) showed that this is a very powerful assumption because sometimes what teacher educators intend to teach is vastly different from what they actually teach. Although Lunenberg et al. (2007) concluded in their study that role modelling by teacher educators may be not effective, they recognised that a thorough in-depth study of the effects of role modelling is needed to make more substantive claims.

Just as teacher educators think back to the people who have had a positive influence on their development and career choices, if teacher educators strive to become people to be emulated by student teachers, we must strive to have a profound effect on others (Kenny, Mann, & MacLeod, 2003). Goodman and Fish (1997) cautioned that inconsistencies between teacher education programmes and social constructivist approaches, and the modelling of these approaches by teacher educators in their practices, undermine student teachers’ beliefs in the importance of the student or learner voice in education. On the other hand, Michalec’s (1999) study revealed that deliberately

modelling constructivist teacher education programmes by teacher educators in their own classrooms creates opportunities for student teachers to understand the principles of constructivist teaching and learning that otherwise would not have been available to them.

Howey and Zimpher (1990) denounced teacher educators for not modelling the type of teaching that provides student teachers with the ability to transfer their knowledge into new situations and apply it to different contexts. They maintained that this ability is essential for student teachers because they, in turn, have to model this type of teaching to their learners in the schools. Furthermore, Lunenburg et al. (1997) emphasised that for student teachers to consider their instructional practices meaningful, teacher educators should model behaviours of accomplished teachers so students would get to know what the purpose of teaching is.

Bahmanbijari et al. (2016) made me aware that in every teacher educator practice there can be a combination of productive and adverse role modelling. They showed me that reflecting with student teachers on these experiences would provide me, and the student teachers, with valuable lessons on role modelling. The reason they gave for this was that, without thinking about these events, students may not have learnt from what they observed. They suggested that being a productive role model was an aspiration to be pursued continuously because no one can lay claim to being an effective role model all the time. Hence, my goal became to try to do the best I can at all times.

From my reading, I anticipated that making time to engage in discussions, deep conceptual thinking, and talks with colleagues would help me to develop as a better role model (Cruess, Cruess, & Steinert, 2008). Cruess et al. (2008) explained further that, despite the challenges of our daily activities as teacher educators coupled with our administrative responsibilities, if we do not make time to engage each other in meaningful dialogue and reflection, then this will be a missed opportunity to learn from each other's experiences. Cruess et al. maintained that taking time out to reflect on the experience would make lessons learned from our role modelling more apparent to our student teachers. They regarded a negative experience being discussed and reflected on between colleagues to be just as powerful as a positive one. Also, Inui (2004) made me aware that there was also an informal curriculum that consisted of nonscheduled activities that take place during teaching and learning, and which is just as formidable as the formal curriculum. More significant to my study, I read that many of the detrimental effects of adverse role modelling can happen in this informal curriculum.

1.7.3 Understanding Professional Learning From a Social Constructivist Perspective

According to Easton (2008, p. 755), “if schools are to meet their increasingly urgent needs, then teachers will have to move from being trained or developed to becoming active learners. Significant change will require teachers to alter their attitudes and behaviours.” Whilst this statement is true for teachers at schools, it is also applicable to teacher educators. The professional learning of teacher educators should impact constructively on the work that they do, which includes their pedagogical practice (Easton, 2008). Easton also maintained that professional learning should be comprehensive so that it takes into account the educational and social context of the teacher educator and encourages “critical reflection on taken for granted assumptions” (2008, p. 755) about teaching and learning.

A social constructivist understanding of professional learning of teacher educators does not only mean learning to teach in more effective ways, but also finding ourselves as we learn with our students and others in our worlds (Webster-Wright, 2009). Although most teacher educators are experienced teachers, they have to develop their own professional learning as teacher educators when they initially join the community of teacher educators (Murray & Male, 2005). This is necessary because the role of the teacher educator is not the same as the role of a schoolteacher (Ritter, 2007).

Ritter (2007, p. 5) explained that “while classroom teachers are expected to teach subject matter, university-based teacher educators are expected to teach about how to teach subject matter.” Ritter went on to reveal that he was reluctant to change his pedagogical beliefs as he transitioned from classroom teacher to university teacher educator because he held the belief that the university educational ideas were too “idealistic and impractical” (2007, p. 12) to use in the classroom. But Ritter soon realised that he had to give up control as the expert he thought he was and realise that he did not have all the answers. This was the first step into him adopting an “enquiry stance” (2007, p. 15) towards his work as a teacher educator. Likewise, I realised that I had to give up control as the perfect teacher educator I thought I was, and accept that if I had any intentions of improving my practice as a teacher educator, then I had to accept there was a problem in my teaching practice.

Related to Ritter’s experiences, sometimes teacher educators who come from the school sector may feel inadequate in comparison to their counterparts. However, they might soon realise that working collaboratively with other teacher educators, and sharing their concerns and reflecting on their problems, will contribute to their professional learning (Hargreaves, 2012). Teacher educators can expand their professional learning and become lifelong learners if they enhance their expertise in

the utilisation of theoretical knowledge and keep up with the advancements in research as well as develop an awareness of their own educational values (Cochrane-Smith, 2005). I elaborate further on my professional learning in the next section where I discuss developing a living educational theory.

1.7.4 Developing a Living Educational Theory

Living educational theory, according to Whitehead (2008, p. 104), “is an explanation by an individual for their educational influence in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formation in which they live and work.” Whitehead added further that a living educational theory is constructed when an individual finds way of improving her practice after identifying a living contradiction. A living contradiction occurs when an individual realises that she is negating her educational values in her educational practice. According to Whitehead (1989, p. 42), a theory is merely a “vehicle for explanation and prediction.” From this, I understood that developing a living theory could provide me with the means of understanding my self-study research and drawing informed conclusions.

When viewing living educational theory from a social constructivist perspective, I can see how Whitehead and McNiff (2006) jointly agreed that researchers construct their living educational theory within the social context in which they find themselves. Furthermore, Whitehead and McNiff maintained that living educational theory is socially constructed from the educative relationships you form with the people in your environment. Whitehead and McNiff added that working with students and colleagues, and the educative conversations you have, influence how you construct your living educational theory because a living educational theory differs from the traditional forms of theory in that the former is grounded in the embodied values of the researcher in a particular social context. While you are transforming yourself, the living educational theory that you construct reflects the human reality of your work.

Whitehead (1989) outlined his thinking of constructing a living educational theory. He advised that the researcher should firstly gather evidence on her classroom activities, which she might capture on video to identify areas in her teaching where her educational values do not play out. She can then carry out an investigation into her own development by researching alternate ways of teaching. During this research process, she can construct her own answers to the questions she asks herself on how to improve her practice so that they are not negating her educational values during her teaching actions.

The researcher then acts on these answers, which are the ways she has visualised to help her improve her practice. The researcher then assesses the impact of these alternate ways and makes changes that would suit her practice. In my understanding, because the researcher is also evaluating ways in which she has changed professionally and personally in relation to the changes she has brought about in her practice, this research falls into the genre of self-study research because the researcher is personally involved in the research process and is evaluating the changes in herself. This makes me think once again about Mitchell and Weber (1999) who saw this change that takes place as “re-invention” (p. 231). Mitchell and Weber claimed that when you reinvent yourself not only do you bring about changes in your pedagogical practice, but you re-envision yourself. I offer my living educational theory in Chapter Ten as an outcome of this self-study.

Having illustrated my understanding of the key concepts that emerged in this study, and viewed them from a social constructivist perspective, I bring this introductory chapter to a close with the conclusion in the next section.

1.8 The Greyness Grew Heavier and She Fell Asleep¹¹

I conclude this first chapter with the words, “The Greyness Grew Heavier and She Fell Asleep,” to portray the end of one chapter in Mary’s life. As she falls asleep in the carriage on the way to her uncle’s house, she does not realise that when she wakes up, another chapter in her life will begin. Similarly, I have completed the opening chapter of the exploration into my role modelling, and will be moving on to a new chapter of my role modelling. Now, I provide a conclusion and an overview of the thesis.

In this opening chapter, I introduced the reader to my study and explained how I used the novel, *The Secret Garden*, as a literary creative nonfiction mechanism for composing this thesis. I then provided relevant background information about myself and my teaching context. I highlighted why this study was important to me as a teacher educator of accounting pedagogy. Drawing on my reading about previous research, I informed the reader what others have already discovered in relation to my research topic, and what lessons I learned from them for my study. I then outlined my research questions and gave a brief explanation of why I formulated these particular questions and how I responded to them. I also clarified the main theoretical perspective of social constructivism, which

¹¹ “She watched it so long and steadily that the greyness grew heavier and heavier and she fell asleep” (Burnett, 1969, p. 14).

framed my research study. Thereafter, I discussed my understanding of the following key concepts that emerged in this study from a social constructivist perspective: accounting pedagogy, role modelling, and professional learning. I went on to explain my understanding of developing a living educational theory through my self-study research.

On commencing this chapter, I explained how I initially refused to believe that I was not the perfect accounting pedagogy teacher educator that I had imagined myself to be. In addition, I refused to believe that I could follow through on my decision to use an arts-based research methodological approach to conduct my self-study of educational practice. But then a strange new thing happened: I found a living contradiction in my pedagogical practice. Another strange new thing occurred—this living contradiction gave me the impetus to transform my practice using an arts-based self-study approach. Then I discovered it could be done, and I wondered why I did not do it before.

Chapter Two

In Chapter Two, I remind the reader about the focus and purpose of the study. I identify the research methodology used in the study and describe the research setting. I provide information on my research participants and my critical friends. I explain the research process I used to generate, represent, and analyse data for my study and provide examples of the data sources. I then inform the reader about the ethical considerations, and how trustworthiness was established. I then describe the actual challenges I faced during this study and how I overcame them. I end with a conclusion where I restate the focus of the chapter and briefly summarise the various sections of the chapter to show how I achieved this purpose.

Chapter Three

In Chapter Three, I describe my lived experiences during my childhood. I provide an account of my early childhood and the events that occurred in my life. I then try to make a link between these experiences and my professional development by showing how certain experiences, people, and places from my lived experiences shaped and moulded me.

Chapter Four

In Chapter Four, I communicate details about my primary school experiences and the events that occurred that warped my image of myself. I describe my home life and the negative experiences in primary school that distorted my view of myself.

Chapter Five

In Chapter Five, I highlight my high school journey. I describe how my life changed for the better in high school as I developed a more positive self-concept. I recall events and people who have had a significant impact on my life. I then relate these events, experiences, and influences to my professional development.

Chapter Six

In Chapter Six, I chronicle my entry into adulthood and delineate my professional career. I describe the different roles that I was playing as a wife, mother, businesswoman, and teacher. I identify meaningful experiences and influences in these roles that carved my path towards my development as a teacher educator.

Chapter Seven

In Chapter Seven, I recount my teaching experiences as a teacher educator and show how I began to try to role model a social constructivist perspective in the first trimester of 2014. In this chapter, I give detailed accounts of various teaching activities and learning activities that I involved my students in for that first trimester of 2014. I explain how I videotaped my lectures and wrote reflections on my pedagogic practice, generated data with my students and critical friends, and wrote reflections on my students' perceptions of my teaching and my critical friends' views on my teaching.

Chapter Eight

In Chapter Eight, I portray my teaching activities for the second trimester of 2014. I depict significant events and activities, and relate the dialogue with my students that occurred during the actual teaching process. I reflect on my teaching and the perspectives of my critical friends on my teaching.

Chapter Nine

In Chapter Nine, I describe how I involved my second- and third-year students in a Blackboard online discussion board activity. I narrate how students confronted me after I informed them the activity would span 5 weeks, that it would be done after lecture time, and that the activity would not be graded therefore no marks would go towards their due performance (DP) marks. I describe this incident as a critical moment in my pedagogic activities. I reflected on this critical moment and drew

a metaphor to represent it. I developed my reflections into a conference paper and presented it at a national university teaching and learning conference. I recount the feedback I received from the conference attendees as my critical friends, and offer my reflections on the feedback.

Chapter Ten

In Chapter Ten, I conclude this thesis. I provide a review of the entire thesis. This is followed by my development of my living educational theory. I then discuss my methodological learning. Next, I provide an analysis of the three collage portraits I developed to represent my learning from the data I generated to address my three research questions. To end, I reflect on what this thesis could offer to others.

CHAPTER TWO: THE ROBIN WHO SHOWED THE WAY¹²

Shut away so long, she wanted to see it
The robin showed the way
singing and twittering
The door, it opened slowly—slowly
wonder, excitement, delight
*She was standing inside the secret garden*¹³

2.1 It Was Because It Had Been Shut so Long She Wanted to See It¹⁴

Using the novel, *The Secret Garden*, as a creative nonfiction device (Cheney, 2001) for constructing this thesis, I gave this chapter the title of a chapter from the novel: “The Robin Who Showed the Way.” I begin this chapter with a free verse poem that I constructed from words in *The Secret Garden*. I chose to use a free verse poem because a free verse poem does not have to follow a set pattern and neither do the words have to rhyme, but it does not totally ignore the rules of poetry. It allows the poet the freedom to express her thoughts and ideas in a nonconventional poetic form while allowing for creative expression (Literary Devices Editors, 2013).

The robin was a friendly red-breasted bird who lived in a nest in the secret garden. With his chirping and twittering, he managed to guide Mary to where the key to the secret garden was buried. I likened the robin to my research methodology because, without the robin, Mary would not have been able to find the key. Likewise, I felt that without my research methodology, I would not have been able to explore what could have influenced my role modelling, what I role modelled for my students, and how I could develop as a more productive role model.

I embarked on this self-study of my educational practice in order to explore what I was role modelling for my students as a teacher educator of accounting pedagogy. This study emanated from a comment by students that they teach as I teach them. After reflecting on the comment, I became aware that there seemed to be a living contradiction in my pedagogical practice because it appeared

¹² “The Robin Who Showed The Way” (Burnett, 1969, p. 56).

¹³ “It was because it had been shut away so long, she wanted to see it” (Burnett, 1969, p. 56). “The robin kept singing and twittering away and tilting his head on one side as if he were excited” (p. 62). “The door which opened slowly—slowly” (p. 63). “Wonder, excitement, delight. She was standing inside the secret garden” (p. 63).

¹⁴ “It was because it had been shut away so long, she wanted to see it” (Burnett, 1969, p. 56).

that my educational values were not evident in my teaching activities. Hence, I undertook this exploration of my practice through an arts-based self-study approach with the intention of improving my practice by aligning my pedagogy with the educational values I wanted to live out.

In Chapter One, I introduced my educational context. I explained why I had chosen to use *The Secret Garden*, as a creative nonfiction device for composing this thesis. I also expounded on how I used a haiku poem as an introduction to that chapter. I then outlined the focus and purpose of my study, which was followed by background information about me in my context. Next, I clarified my rationale for undertaking this research study. I then showed how I developed each research question and how I responded to each question. Thereafter, I described the theoretical lens of social constructivism through which I viewed the key concepts that emerged from this study. Next, I provided my understanding of these key concepts. I then explained my understanding of developing a living educational theory (Whitehead, 1989). I concluded the chapter by providing an overview of all the chapters in this thesis.

In this chapter, I identify the research methodology I adopted in this study. This is followed by a description of the location of the study. I then describe my research participants. Thereafter, I explain who my critical friends were and what their contribution to my study was. Next, I identify and describe each research practice that I used to generate, represent, and analyse data for the study. I give reasons for choosing each practice and show how it helped me respond to my research questions. Ethical issues are then elucidated. This is followed by how I achieved trustworthiness for my research methodology. I then narrate the challenges I faced while conducting this research. I conclude the chapter by highlighting the key message of the chapter. Now, I illuminate my search for a research methodological approach to undertake this study.

2.2 The Key to the Closed Garden¹⁵

I began this section with the heading, “The Key to the Closed Garden,” mainly because it was suggestive of my experience regarding my choice of a self-study research methodology. Mary, in the novel, feels that once she finds the key to the secret garden, she will then be able to open the door and her curiosity about what is behind those high walls of the secret garden will be sated. Similarly, I felt that my curiosity about my role modelling would also be appeased if I found the research methodology that best suited my research purposes as outlined in the next section.

¹⁵ “The Key to the Garden” (Burnett, 1969, p. 50).

2.2.1 Searching for the Key¹⁶

I titled this subsection “Searching for the Key” to portray my search for the most suitable research methodology for my study. I show how I searched for an initial understanding of my research methodology.

From my initial reading on self-study of teacher education practices, I learned that self-study research could enable teacher educators like myself, who wished to study their teaching practice in order to acquire a broader understanding of it (Pinnegar, Hamilton, & Fitzgerald, 2010). I anticipated that self-study research would be crucial for my professional development because it would lead to improvements in my teaching as I explored my practice while at the same time engaging in academic dialogue through making my research public as work in progress (Samaras, 2011).

Beck, Freese, and Kosnik (as cited in Lassonde, Galman, & Kosnik, 2009, p. 10) described self-study as “an inquiry-oriented approach that is personal, reflective, collaborative and constructivist.” From this, I understood that given that self-study was described as inquiry-oriented, I would be asked probing questions about my practice, for example, “How can I improve my practice?” The word, personal, in the definition denoted that the research would be about me and conducted by me. The word, reflective, indicated that having identified a problem in my teaching practice, I would need to reflect on the problem and seek solutions to resolve or minimise the problem. From collaborative, I understood that reflecting with others was a key requirement of self-study research (Loughran, 2004). In my understanding, self-study was described as constructivist because new knowledge would be constructed as I sought alternate ways of improving my teaching practice. The significant role of social constructivism, as described in Chapter One, was also highlighted for me because I understood that I would be studying myself in relation to my practice. My practice would include my students, my colleagues, and significant others whom I would call critical friends. Hence, I realised that my self-study research process would have to be “interactive” because I would have to work collaboratively with others to develop new knowledge (La Boskey, 2004, p. 843). In my self-study research, I would have to ask critical questions about my pedagogic practice concerning my actual teaching activities in the field of teacher education. I would also have to be open to questions about my understandings of my teaching and learning through making public the learning being generated by my self-study inquiry. This is a distinguishing element of self-study

¹⁶ “Searching for the Key” (Burnett, 1969, p. 50).

research because making public learning about teaching student teachers could be beneficial to the teacher education community (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999).

I learned that while self-study research is “self-initiated and self-focused” (La Boskey, 2004, p. 842), it would permit me to study not only my own practice but also to explore my students’ learning—two very important factors that constantly engage with each other. This interchange between these two factors was alluring because I anticipated that it would allow my pedagogy to become an integral whole instead of being divided into fragmented pieces (Samaras & Freese, 2006). I also became aware that I would be the researcher conducting the research and a participant in the research itself, and that the focus of the research would be on me and on my practice as it was unfolding (Samaras, 2011).

As Samaras and Roberts (2011) highlighted, over the years, teachers and teacher educators have lamented their lack of input about decisions taken that affect them directly. I understood that there was not much as a teacher educator that I could do about this situation because I lacked the power to change the national education system. However, through my reading on self-study research, I realised that instead of focusing on broader issues over which I had no control, I would acquire the power, through my self-study research process, to change myself (Samaras & Roberts, 2011). I am in charge of my classroom and if I could acquire the power of reinventing my educational practice through my self-study research (Mitchell & Weber, 1999), and role model this for my students, then I would have done my bit to improve the education system (Samaras & Freese, 2006). Hence, I had understood self-study should be “improvement aimed” (La Boskey, 2004, p. 844).

In consulting literature on self-study research, I was enlightened that there were numerous methods that I could adopt (Samaras, 2011). These different research practices for enacting self-study, while being different, can complement each other, for example, interviews, personal experience, participatory research, narrative enquiry, co-/autoethnography, and artistic methods, among others (Lassonde et al., 2009). However, Feldman, Paugh, and Mills (2004) and Feldman (as cited in Lassonde et al., 2009) emphasised that with self-study research, irrespective of the method used, the self must be at the forefront of the study.

From my reading (Samaras, 2011) and my interaction with critical friends who were using arts-based methods, I was inspired to use arts-based methods in my self-study to generate and represent data to answer my research questions. Leavy (2009, pp. 2–3) explained that arts-based approaches

to research can provide “engaged ways in which theory and practice are intertwined.” Arts-based methods draw on the visual and performing arts such as collage, painting, drawing, music, dance, and role playing, as well as on literary arts-based forms such as poetry and narrative (Leavy, 2009). I was initially intimidated by an arts-based approach, but I learned from researchers, for example, Gerstenblatt (2013) and Butler-Kisber (2008), that any novice could cut and paste images and text on a surface to represent their learning through a collage. This did not require any artistic or creative flair, nor did it require previous experience in the arts.

To generate data to answer my first research question on what could have influenced my role modelling, I decided to use a personal history self-study approach by recalling and recounting specific episodes, people, places, and events in my life history that could have influenced me and shaped me to role model in certain ways (Samaras et al., 2004). I decided to compose a personal history narrative by drawing on a range of sources, namely, old photographs, new photographs of old places and people in my family, artefacts, and journal entries where I recorded my thoughts and feelings during my research process (see Chapters Three to Six).

To generate data for my second research question on what I was role modelling for my students, I videotaped my lectures, reflected on the videotapes, and recorded my reflections in my reflective journal. In addition, I gathered evidence from students in the form of a reflective questionnaire, the institution’s lecturer evaluation surveys that are completed every year by students, and conversations with critical friends and colleagues. I involved the students in an activity where they had to choose and draw a metaphor of me as their teacher educator and provide an explanation as to why they chose that metaphor (see Chapter Seven).

To generate data for my third research question on how I could develop as a more productive role model, I adopted a social constructivist approach in my teaching of accounting pedagogy with my second- and third-year students. I videotaped my lessons and recorded my reflections in my reflective diary. I involved students in the metaphor drawing activity again, and held conversations with my critical friends and colleagues and recorded those reflections in my reflective journal (see Chapters Seven and Eight).

In composing my narrative portrayals of my personal history and my pedagogical explorations (as presented in Chapters Three to Nine), I drew on Coulter and Smith’s (2009) advice on the use of literary elements to keep my readers reading to the last page. Barone (2008) described such

narratives as “narrative constructions” (p. 456) because representing and analysing data in the form of a story is more aptly known as “textual arrangement” (p. 456). What he meant by this is that unlike conventional research reports which are concerned with how factual knowledge is presented (often in the form of tables), a narrative construction depicts experience thus allowing the researcher more room for interpretation, and giving the reader the opportunity to view the educational occurrences from varying perspectives and with a piqued interest.

I therefore paid attention to the literary elements of characters, actions, viewpoints, plot, and setting (Coulter & Smith, 2009). This helped me to carefully consider the relationships between myself and the people I included in my narratives in ways that could offer “the concrete detail of setting, actors, and actions to render the narrative persuasive and coherent as a whole” (p. 588).

Given that this was my first encounter with the arts as research, I felt invigorated by the prospect of experimenting with different art forms and the ideas informing arts-based research methodologies because I found the arts to be enthralling. My sentiments echoed those of Eisner (2008, p. 23) who highlighted that art is “evocative, provocative, emotional, and at best, arresting.” Moreover, Eisner pointed out that “the arts stimulated, refined, and conveyed meanings that could not be expressed in any other form of representation” (2008, p. 23).

Referring back to the novel, *The Secret Garden*, Mary eventually finds the key. For Mary, finding the key is quite a momentous event and I shared Mary’s joy. She is so overwhelmed that she keeps the key in her pocket for a few days, hugging the secret to herself because she cannot believe that she actually has the key to the secret garden. Mary is lost in the wonderment of the mystery behind that closed door. Likewise, having found the key of self-study research, I was lost in the wonderment of the mystery of what my personal history and arts-based methodological approaches might unearth about my role modelling. But before I discuss that, in the next section, I explain the context in which this study took place.

2.3 She Was Standing Inside the Secret Garden¹⁷

I gave this section the heading “She Was Standing Inside the Secret Garden” from the novel. Once Mary steps inside the secret garden, she feels she has found a world of her own. Similarly, I likened

¹⁷ “She was standing inside the secret garden” (Burnett, 1969, p. 62).

the context in which my research study took place to the inside of that secret garden—a world of my own.

The university of technology where my study took place is situated in a predominantly black township¹⁸ just outside the city of Pietermaritzburg. The campus I work on is one of seven campuses that belong to the university. In Pietermaritzburg there are two campuses, one offering management and business environment qualifications, and my campus is where the school of education is situated. The other five campuses are located in Durban, a major city in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The campus where I teach is located next to a technical and vocational education and training college and a high school so it is an area fairly busy with students and school learners. The school of education shares the campus with the nursing department and the civil engineering department. It is a fairly well resourced university, and offers a variety of vocationally oriented qualifications.

Presently, the school of education only offers one undergraduate 4-year Bachelor of Education degree, preparing teachers to teach in the further education and training (FET) band, which is Grades 10–12. However, a number of postgraduate teaching qualifications are being developed, which is my responsibility as the curriculum developer in addition to my lecturing position in the school of education. The school of education was established in 2002 when the institution was declared a university of technology. Prior to that, the school and campus was a government institution and operated as a college of education, training teachers to teach from Grades R–12. However, a new education dispensation was passed, and all colleges of education in South Africa were closed and universities of technology were established instead. The school of education functions under the faculty of arts and design.

Presently, there are about 1,200 students in the school of education, with 98% black students and 2% Indian and coloured students.¹⁹ The school of education has no white students registered. Students range from first year to fourth year, registered in the school of education, completing the Bachelor of Education degree whilst there are 14 students completing a doctorate in education,

¹⁸ The Group Areas Act was the title of three acts of the Parliament of South Africa enacted under the apartheid government of South Africa prior to 1994. The acts assigned racial groups to different residential areas. The non-white population were assigned to living areas called townships.

¹⁹ From 1948–1994, South African politics was dominated by Afrikaner Nationalism. Racial segregation and white minority rule known officially as *apartheid* came into existence in 1960. The country was divided along racial lines into four racial groups namely, White, Indian, coloured, and Bantu (black) people (Louw, 2004).

which is the only postgraduate qualification offered by the school at present. The Bachelor of Education degree is divided into three areas of specialisation, namely, economic and management sciences, natural sciences, and technology. The campus boasts a residence facility that accommodates 400 students while other students are housed in private establishments rented by the university. The staff–student ratio varies dramatically according to the subjects. Certain core subjects are compulsory, therefore, all students in that level have to register for those subjects. There can be approximately 400 students in a class at one time. Teaching assistants are employed to assist lecturers, and part-time markers to help with the marking load. The elective subjects are highly specialised and require specialised staff and equipment, therefore, the staff–student ratio for these subjects could be as low as 1:15.

The school of education is managed by a head of department who is assisted by a programme coordinator and two administrative staff. All other functions, for example, registration and housing are managed by support departments. The campus has a library, a number of lecture theatres, open access laboratories, a cafeteria, a sports centre, a clinic with a resident nurse, a writing centre, and a resident psychologist. All other services are provided by support departments that service the entire university. In the school of education, there are 32 staff members including part-time staff, laboratory assistants, and computer technicians. I teach in the economic and management sciences area of specialisation. In this area of specialisation, there are four staff members. I am the only woman and I teach accounting, which is a compulsory subject and, therefore, I have very large classes. The male staff members teach economics, business studies, and information technology. We work very closely and have regular meetings to discuss our teaching activities and assessments. We support each other and offer ourselves as critical friends to each other. In the next section, I provide more details about the participants in this study.

2.4 Will You Help Me Do It?²⁰

These words, “Will You Help Me Do It” are uttered by Mary to her new friend Dickon, the village boy, and, most suitably, depict the collaborative nature of my self-study research. Despite the fact that I was the main research participant because I was studying myself, I could not undertake this self-study research alone. I solicited others to participate in my study.

²⁰ “Will you come again and help me do it?” (Burnett, 1969, p. 88).

I am a woman, 53 years of age, a teacher educator of accounting pedagogy at a university of technology. In my teaching qualification, I studied towards becoming an English and history teacher but on assuming my first permanent employment with the Department of Education in South Africa, circumstances at the school where I was appointed changed my direction of teaching. I was asked to teach accounting, business studies, and economics and developed a flair for teaching accounting.

After improving my qualifications, I assumed duty as a college of education lecturer, lecturing accounting and business studies to student teachers. Due to the colleges of education being closed by the Department of Education, I was redeployed to a high school where I spent a number of years teaching economic and management sciences to Grade 9 (Standard 7) learners and accounting and business studies from Grades 10–12 (Standards 8–10). The college of education where I had lectured previously was developed into a university of technology and I was reappointed as a teacher educator of accounting from 2008 till the present (2017).

In addition to my contribution as the main participant in this study, I generated data on what I was role modelling with my second- and third-year accounting students in 2014. There were 92 second-year students and 56 third-year students who participated in my study. All students were completing the 4-year Bachelor of Education degree with specialisation in economic and management sciences. I had lectured accounting education to all these students from their first year of study. The majority of the students were first-generation university students straight out of high school, while there were only a few who came from affluent backgrounds where parents were graduates. The reason for this was that the university attracted students from rural areas whose parents were farmers, farm labourers, or employed in factories and in houses as domestic workers, or were self-employed as street vendors. I had a few students who had studied at other universities but not one of the students had a completed qualification in any field. Prior to this study, I had never considered, for even one moment, my students' backgrounds despite the fact that all students' demographic details are available on the institution's database. I had never bothered to enquire about their socioeconomic status, whether they were first-generation university students, or that a large number were parents themselves. I had also never before considered the impact this might have on their learning and, more importantly, on my teaching. Just as my participants made a major contribution to this study, my critical friends whom I discuss in the next section, were invaluable to the success of the research.

2.5 My Word, That's Riches²¹

In the novel, *The Secret Garden*, these words, “My Word, That's Riches” are spoken by Martha, the young woman who works as a servant in the manor house where Mary lived. She says this when she finds out that the housekeeper gives Mary money every week on the instructions of her uncle. Despite the fact that it is only a shilling a week, to Martha it is riches. On a similar note, I regarded my critical friends as my riches because the contribution they made to my study was worth a fortune to me.

Stenhouse (as cited in Kember, et al., 1997) recognised a critical friend as a person who worked closely with a teacher-researcher, offering encouragement and support not only during the research process but also in the professional development of the teacher-researcher. According to Costa and Kallick (1993), critical friends whilst asking questions also give constructive criticism. Although critical friends might not be associated with the research at hand, they ask provocative questions that help the researchers view their research with new ideas (Costa & Kallick, 1993). Critical friends listen to the researcher, answer their questions truthfully, and encourage them to succeed (Costa & Kallick, 1993).

Firstly, the critical friends who worked with me closely and were involved in my daily teaching activities and my research study were two men who are employed in the school of education in my area of specialisation. In order to protect their identities, I have not used their names. The first was Mr. C whose office is located next to mine. He teaches economics education, and is registered for his doctoral studies at the same institution where I am registered for my doctoral studies. Mr. C joined the institution in 2010, coming from Zimbabwe with a master's degree in business administration (MBA), which he completed at an international institution based in Zimbabwe. He was a lecturer in a number of commerce subjects, including accounting, at a university in Zimbabwe but his specialisation is economics. Mr. C and I shared the same lecture venues next to each other on a daily basis. This was indeed a very great advantage because we would have informal chats about our teaching while waiting for students to arrive at lectures and on many occasions we would sit in on each other's lectures not to assess one another but just to give an outsider evaluation of our lessons.

²¹“My word, that's riches, said Martha” (Burnett, 1969, p. 70).

When I first spoke about my self-study research to my other critical friend, Dr. J, who also comes from Zimbabwe and was employed in 2010 as a lecturer in information technology, which was one of the subjects in the economic and management sciences specialisation, he laughed at me. He has a doctorate in information technology and proved to be the ideal critical friend. Creative nonfiction writing and arts-based activities were the furthest thoughts from his mind and that is why he proved to be such a valuable critical friend. Mr. C's contribution was unsurpassed but, at times, he looked at my subject content more closely than he looked at my teaching style and teaching approach. Dr. J, on the other hand, did not teach accounting and he exclaimed to me when he first saw an example of my arts-based research that he was not into this "airy fairy stuff." He had never heard of self-study research previously and, when I asked him to draw a metaphor of me, he copied something off the Internet and gave it to me. It took many hours of me trying to explain to him what self-study was about and, at the time, I was highly irritated because I thought he was wasting my valuable time. Nevertheless, the refreshingly clear questions that he asked me about self-study research challenged my own assumptions and I now realise that during the process of explaining to him, I was strengthening my own understanding.

I was also introduced to the Transformative Educational Studies (TES) project group by my supervisor. The group comprises researchers, supervisors, and their doctoral and master's students drawn together by their interest in self-study research (Harrison, Pithouse-Morgan, Conolly, & Meyiwa, 2012). I was extremely fortunate in that the members of the TES group, notwithstanding the fact that all are involved in self-study research, came together in this project group as university educators from extremely diverse disciplines, for example, jewellery design and construction, garment making, dramatic arts, and performing arts. However, we are all involved in teaching at institutions of higher education. Since 2012, we have met every month at the university where I am registered for doctoral studies and I engaged in rich, stimulating, and thought-provoking discussions with my critical friends in this group to develop knowledge about our pedagogy so that we could improve our own teaching practice (La Boskey, 2004).

Engaging with my critical friends in the TES project group, not only during the monthly sessions but also online using social media and other collaborative online platforms such as Edmodo (www.Edmodo.com), we created a community of practice (Wenger, 1998). We shared a common interest, which was our self-study research practices, we learned from each other and with each other, and we shared our pedagogic experiences with each other, thereby creating a collective range of experiences to help improve our individual practices.

My critical friends in the TES project group have contributed greatly to the enhancement of my study. For example, when I presented the collage portrait that I constructed to answer my second research on what I role model, Lungi, one of the TES project group members' comment initiated much introspection on my part when she pointed out to me that if I did not pay heed to the negative as well as the positive responses that students gave on my role modelling, then no learning would take place for me (Hiralaal, Matebane, & Pithouse-Morgan, in press). One of the key features of self-study research is the involvement of others in confronting problems in your pedagogic practice that you would normally ignore because of the many pressures involved in everyday teaching activities (Loughran, 2004). Through self-study research, I was able to join others and share perspectives and ideas so that my views on my pedagogic practice were not restricted to my personal assumptions only (Samaras & Freese, 2002, see Chapter Ten). Another example is when Lorraine, one of the TES project group supervisors, cautioned me during my presentation of my second collage portrait that I must be careful of saying what I wanted the collage portrait to reveal. Rather, I should say what the collage portrait revealed about me.

Furthermore, I learned that my critical friends, as fellow students in the TES group, shared similar misgivings as mine about their practice, their teaching, their students' learning, and their doctorate studies. For instance, a number of us grappled with the issue of being consistent with our writing of our thesis. We agreed that for 15 minutes every day we would all write something and if we could, we would share this writing with each other. Some of the group diligently carried out this practice with excellent results but I indicated that I could not write for 15 minutes because I preferred writing a lot at once instead of a little every day. The group accepted that and helped me with ways I could manage this.

The open and honest relationships we had was based on trust and mutual respect for one another. We were not there to harshly damage each other with caustic comments and cynical remarks but, rather, to enhance a spirit of collegiality. Our meetings became a time when we could reflect on our practice and how we understand our practice in relation to the practice of each other—and just be together in the safe, warm, and trusting company of each other. With those reassuring thoughts in mind, I move onto the next section, which comprises a detailed account of the research practices that I used in this study.

2.6 Dickon²²

I titled this section “Dickon.” In *The Secret Garden*. Dickon is a young village boy, the brother of the maid, Martha. Dickon is at one with nature because he has a gentle and caring manner and an enquiring mind. Even wild animals are drawn to him. I likened him to the variety of research practices that I used to generate, represent, and analyse data for my research study because the research practices that I used enabled me to explore and gain knowledge about my role modelling. I equated this with Dickon because he brings new knowledge to Mary about plants and flowers, animals, and nature. He is a responsible and well-liked young boy and I feel he represents all that is good and wholesome. My research practices also made me feel this way because they helped me improve my pedagogic practice by making me more knowledgeable about my role modelling and about my self-study as a teacher educator.

2.6.1 Journaling

Whilst King and LaRocco (2006) defined a journal as a person’s enduring or lasting record of their thought processes, which they expressed in words in a journal, Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009b) described a journal as a “writing tool” (p. 123) where writers have free reign to express their thoughts, feelings, and views freely. From my reading, I have realised that many researchers and writers hold different conceptions of journaling and what a journal really is. Cochrane-Smith and Lytle (1993) wrote about journals that teachers keep as being a place where they record their teaching experiences, critically evaluate their experiences, and then find ways and means of improving their teaching activities. They stated that journaling had the added benefit of teachers recording the event or the experience immediately or soon after it occurred. This helped the teacher to view, with changing perspectives, what was happening to the learners or students in class. Rager (2005) on the other hand, defined journaling, based on her experience, as a way of expressing her feelings and emotions about a situation, thereby acting as a data gathering mechanism. She found that her entries in her journal strengthened her research.

During my self-study research process of generating data through my teaching from February 2014 until June 2014, I recorded even the most minute detail of my teaching experiences and reflected on these in my journal because I felt that every experience, no matter how trivial, was significant to my study. From February 2015 till June 2015, I videotaped my lectures but I did not reflect on my lectures immediately by writing in my journal. I watched the videotapes at a later stage and then did

²² “Dickon” (Burnett, 1969, p. 74).

a retrospective reflection on the experiences recorded in my journal. I found this to be very valuable because I viewed my teaching from two different viewpoints. I had an insider perspective when I was recording and reflecting on my daily teaching activities. When I did a retrospective reflection on my videotaped lessons, it seemed as if I was looking at my teaching from an outsider perspective. This helped me to get a clearer and more objective perspective of myself in the classroom and I was more critical of myself when I did a retrospective analysis.

At the conclusion of my data generating process, I had four hardcover 96-page notebooks with detailed accounts of what occurred in and out of my classroom (Figure 2.1).



Figure 2.1 My reflective journals

Sometimes, when I experienced something that was profound and I did not have my notebooks in which to record it, I would write on pieces of sticky notepads because I was afraid that if I did not capture the moment immediately, the moment would be lost. I would then stick these notes of paper into my notebooks and reflect on the events that occurred (Figure 2.2).

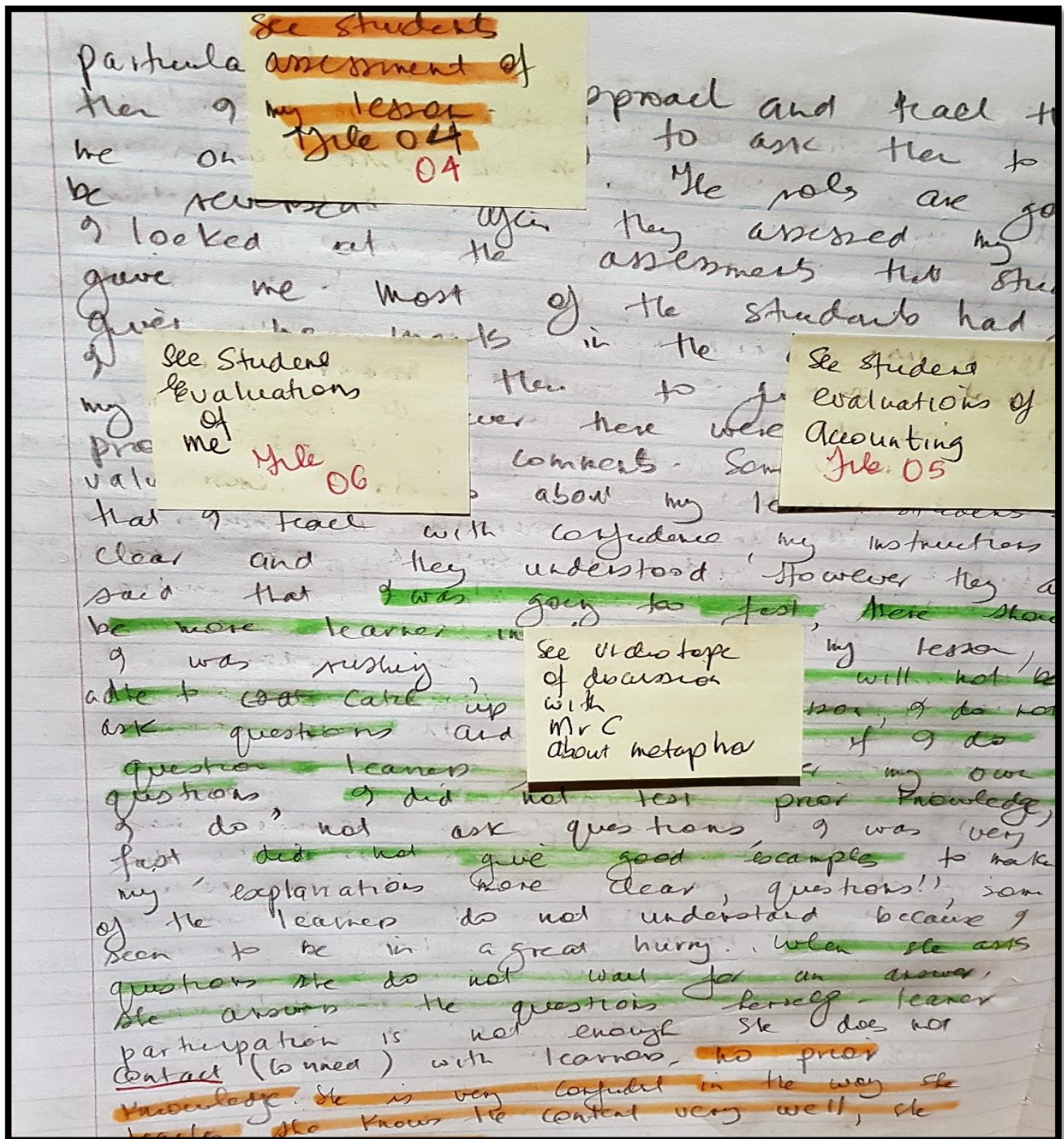


Figure 2.2 Field notes on sticky paper

I preferred a handwritten journal because I felt that my handwriting was more personal. I had the choice of keeping an online journal but I felt a handwritten journal was somehow closer to my emotions, feelings, and thoughts. I wrote with different coloured pens because I wanted certain experiences to stand out and remain vivid in my memory (Figure 2.3).

of them have really become more confident because
 they also do CAT and when I was asking them to
 prepare and present some lessons it was bad.
 Mr C: In Economics it was OK. They seem to
 be more sure of themselves. Maybe in CAT they
 are secured because the learners are working on
 the computer.
 Me: Yes, their presentation skills have improved.
 Did you see Mr SS Dlamini presenting. He is so
 confident and self-assured and he has such a good
 and relaxing voice. You feel like listening to him.
 He is a natural born teacher.
 Mr J: Yes, he does CAT as well and he is the same.
 He is always trying to help everyone else.
 Me: Well, what do you think about the teaching style
 I am adopting? Is it working?
 Mr C: I have seen a good improvement in your
 students since they had that session with the
 people from the writing centre. It really helped them.
 Mr J: Yes, I did tell you that the Education
 lecturers were saying that they do that often. They
 invite the Student Academic Practitioners and the
 Writing Centre tutors to their lectures to assist. They
 say the difference thereafter is great. They notice a
 dramatic improvement in their students' ability to cope
 with academic skills improve by leaps and bounds.
 Me: I must admit apart from my students I really
 enjoyed the session. I really learnt a lot from the
 tutors. You think you know how to deal with
 academic texts and journal articles etc having dealt with
 it for so many years. They taught me a few new
 skills that really assisted me when I was working

Figure 2.3 Different colours in my reflective journal

Sometimes I would go back to certain experiences and I found that when I had had a few days to think about what happened, I viewed the experience from a different perspective.

Furthermore, I used journal writing to reflect on what I was learning from making my self-study research public. For example, I presented my work in progress at a national university teaching and learning conference in 2015 (as discussed in Chapter Nine). I audiotaped my presentation at the teaching and learning conference where I presented my metaphor drawing of a tightrope walker. I recorded my reflections in my journal on the feedback that I received from the blind peer review of my conference paper as well as the feedback I received from the audience after my presentation. I also audiotaped the presentation of my second collage portrait to the TES project group, and I reflected on the feedback.

At times when I could not explicitly express what I wanted to say through writing in my journal, I drew diagrams and pictures to make up the story, and this helped me to better reflect on the activity or the experience (Figure 2.4).

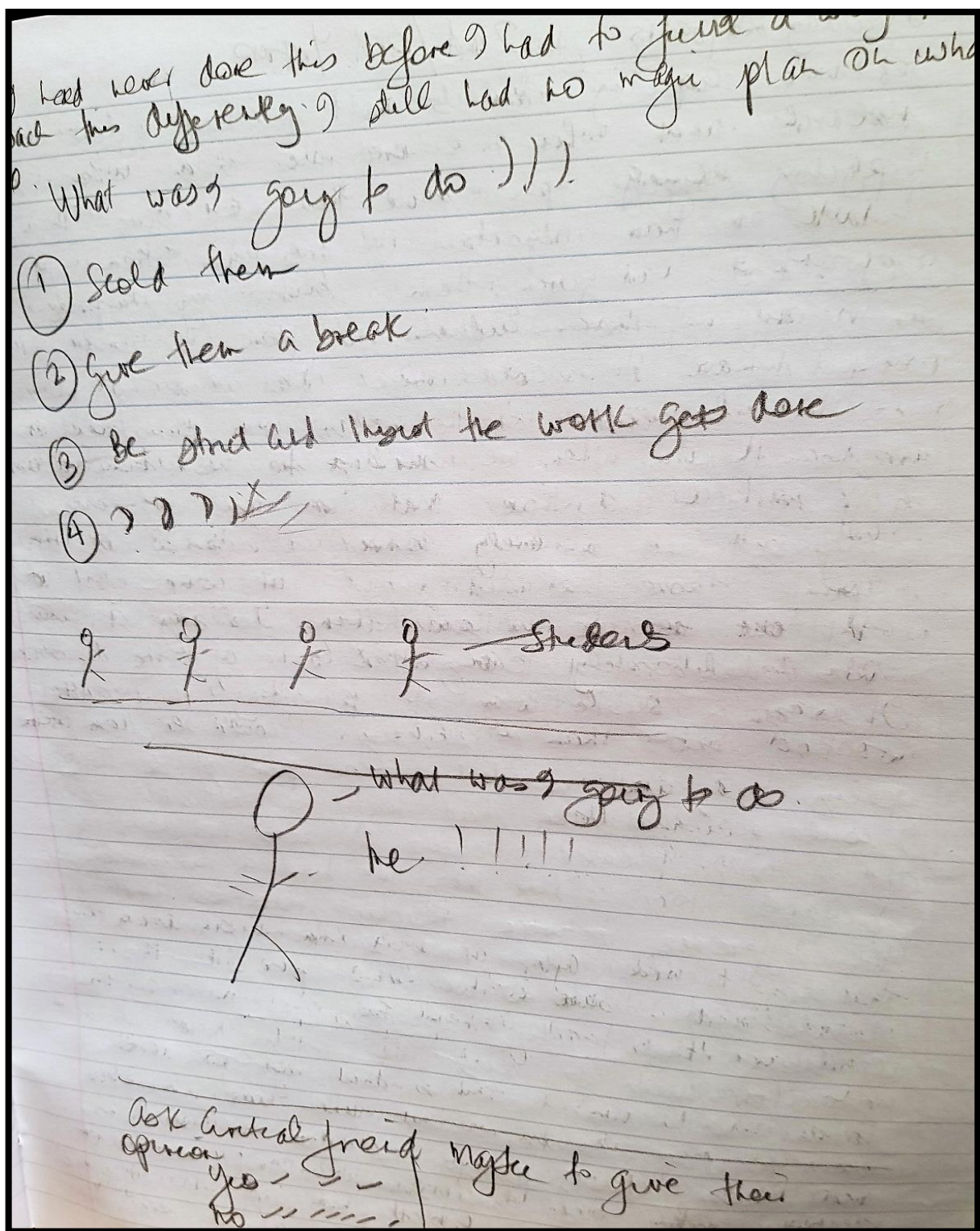


Figure 2.4 Drawings from my reflective journal

Journaling helped me to see things from different perspectives and to rethink my teaching and research. Apart from recording my daily teaching experiences, I audiotaped my discussions with my critical friends and reflected on these discussions in my journal. Sometimes, I would rant and rave in my journal and my writing would become untidy and be all over the place. But I now see that this

haphazard and all-over-the-place writing was my therapy for coming to terms with the issues I wrote about. When rereading my reflective journal, I was sometimes shocked by what I had written because, at times, it sounded rather silly whilst at other times, the writing was emotional, captivating, and meaningful. I found that I enjoyed the journal writing and sometimes I could not stop writing. I wrote pages-long reflections and got carried away because I felt that writing about my teaching helped me to come to terms with many aspects of my teaching that had posed a problem to me. The more I wrote, the more I wanted to write.

2.6.2 Photographs as Artefacts

As Samaras (2011) explained, artefacts refer to the objects selected by self-study researchers from their lived experiences, and which they use as a mechanism to reflect upon their experiences and teaching practices. These objects are not newly bought but are usually old, used items that hold special significance for the researcher. The researchers are attached to these artefacts by memories and significant events that the artefacts symbolise. Depending on what is symbolised by an artefact, these emotions can range from anger to happiness (Samaras, 2011). When the researcher reflects on the feelings and thoughts surrounding that object, she can develop a deeper understanding of the experiences signified by the object. This can help her to view the situation from a fresh perspective that could contribute to her improvement and development, especially if the experience has negative connotations and impacted negatively on her development. Over the years, she may have moved on from the negative effects associated with the artefact and can thus proceed more positively with her advancement, personally and professionally, after viewing and reflecting on the artefact with a transformed perspective (Mitchell & Weber, 1999).

Allender and Manke (2004, p. 20) described how, from their experience, “the use of artefacts opens evocative methodological paths.” Allender and Manke explained further that artefacts are items from our everyday lives and it is these items that give an indication of who we are, and what is happening in our lives on a daily basis. Self-study has an opulent record in the use and analysis of artefacts that provide physical evidence of classroom activities (Allender & Manke, 2004).

Objects or artefacts can represent evidence of self-study researchers’ lived experiences (Pithouse-Morgan & van Laren, 2012). Consequently, I used old photographs from family albums as personal history artefacts. Photographs were very useful in my personal history self-study research because they helped to address the question, “Who am I?” (Harrison, 2002). Photographs extended personal history self-study into a form that was more tangible. This helped me to make meaning of the past

in order to plan the direction my future could take. However, as Mitchell and Weber (1999) cautioned, I had to be aware of how artefacts, especially school photographs “evoke rituals and idealised” (p. 74) images of events that have been captured by the camera. Regardless of the circumstances captured in the photograph, when we look at the photographs later, we tend to see the events with rose-coloured spectacles (Mitchell & Weber, 1999).

I used photographs to seek and reconstruct past events and experiences that I believed were profoundly significant to my personal and professional development. Not only did photographs help me to reconstruct the past, but they assisted me to rethink experiences of the present and give new meanings to these experiences so that I developed a deeper understanding of the experience (Harrison, 2002). I came to see how a photograph is “worth a thousand words” (Sadiq, 2013, p. 12) when I understood complex and abstract meanings through a single image.

Photographs allowed me to express my feelings and my thoughts in a nonverbal way because I found that photographs had multiple layers of meaning and could be viewed from different perspectives depending on the context in which the photograph was taken, as well as what the person who took the photograph intended. I found that photographs acted like a conduit by conveying my innermost emotions in an artistic manner. I also experienced photographs to be a form of self-interpretation (Sadiq, 2013). In addition, I recognised that photographs acted as evidence of existence. For example, the only photograph I have of my father (Figure 3.4) solidified my emotions—because I “knew” my father did exist even though I have no memory of him. Although I cannot remember anything about him, the photograph made him into a real person for me. The photograph acted as a bridge between the present and past experiences (as described in Chapter Three). Photographs took me back to events long forgotten, and I probed deeper than the surface of the photographs and gave meaning to certain events and experiences that I believed were most relevant to my development because they preserved a specific reality (Expressuser, 2011).

The photographs that I selected as remnants from my lived experiences produced an overflow of intense, powerful feelings at times inflamed by compelling emotions. Sometimes, it was sorrow when the artefact awakened memories about a sad experience. Certain artefacts awakened feelings that I had suppressed, while at times I was elated at the memory and feelings of happiness that an artefact evoked. Handling the artefacts or looking at photographs of them drew my attention to significant aspects of my personal history. Not only did this help me understand who I am and where I came from but, more importantly, where I was going.

2.6.3 Taking Photographs

In composing this thesis, I took new photographs and used them as illustrations to the text. Although, I had old photographs of family members, I found the need to take new photographs of certain places that were noteworthy to my personal history narrative because I felt exactly like Jones (2006), who used photographs for presenting data. He argued that analysing a photograph and then converting the analysis into written text would not give “an equally full lively and complex picture” (p. 66) as the visual text of the photograph. He also claimed that including photographs was more interesting than written text alone.

As Warren and Karner (2005) highlighted, “photographs taken by the researcher tend to focus on aspects that the researcher has found interesting, important or something that could have made an impact on their lives” (p. 171). For example, the photograph of my parents’ old home (see Chapter Three). I thought I was exceptionally fortunate in being able to find the house in the original state as when my parents lived there 55 years ago. However, going to the now sad and neglected home heightened my sense of desolation and abandonment. The house being vacant added more to my disappointment. Although I was too young to remember the events surrounding my father’s death and the expulsion of my mother from our home, there was an eerie and uncanny atmosphere when I walked around the house. I felt the sadness and hurt my mother must have felt on the day my father passed away. I just wanted to get out of there because the feelings I experienced weighed me down.

I also took photographs of my former primary and high schools, (see Chapter Four, Figure 4.1 and Chapter Five, Figure 5.1). As discussed in Chapter Four and Chapter Five, my school was initially a primary school and then it became a high school. However, certain buildings that were there when the school was a primary school are still there now, for example, the music room, which also served as a needlework room. On seeing this building, I had bittersweet memories. At the time of taking the photograph, although I was haunted by the sad memories, I was also relieved that I could come to that place and walk away with my dignity intact. I realised then that I was at peace with myself and that I had moved on from the hurt and the anger. I think the best thing for me was taking the photographs of my primary school.

In the same school grounds, I walked to where the new buildings of the high school now stand. As I walked around, I could still get the smell of fresh paint and the varnish on the doors as they were on my first day of high school. I could see the gleaming chrome and glass notice boards, and the

shiny taps in the bathrooms. In my mind I saw my English teacher—who literally gave me back my life, my dignity, and my self-respect—dramatising a history lesson, and I could see myself and my friends all dressed up in our costumes acting out our poorly written plays (Chapter Four).

I also took photographs of my process of developing my first collage portrait (see later in this chapter). Creating the collage portrait was a very rewarding exercise for me because although I felt I had no artistic ability or creative abilities, I was able to use an arts-based research method. It was a thrill for me to photograph every step of the collage portrait-making process and, once I developed the skill of taking a photograph with my cell phone and sending it to my computer, I became an old hand at taking photographs and wanted to photograph everything. I even took photographs of myself in my bedroom in the middle of the night, rearranging my collage portrait because “photographs show us how things really are, they are seen as documenting reality and the truth” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 105). As Denzin (2001, p. 26) explained, “the meanings of lived experiences are inscribed and made visible in these photographs.”

I also took photographs of my accounting pedagogy teaching and learning activities (Chapters Seven and Eight). These photographs showed the transformation in my teaching activities as I introduced purposeful pedagogies from a social constructivist perspective. In order to protect the identities of the people in the photographs for ethical reasons, I used the “artistic effects” tool on my computer to blur the photographs and block some of the faces. Whilst the images are still visible, the faces are now unrecognisable.

2.6.4 Metaphors and Metaphor Drawing

Metaphors can give teacher educators the opportunity to take a step out of their context, observe and understand their practice, reframe certain events from their practice and, in so doing, create potential avenues for improvement of practice (East, 2009).

In the learning environment of accounting pedagogy, I tapped into students’ creative thinking and reflexivity and asked them to develop their own teaching philosophies by finding a metaphor that best described themselves as a teacher in the classroom (Besette & Paris, 2016). I extended this activity and asked students in groups to find a metaphor that best described me as their teacher educator in the classroom, and to draw this metaphor (shown in Chapter Seven). My aim was to encourage my students to become reflective thinkers and to probe deep within themselves and, thus, become aware of themselves, their capabilities, their fears and insecurities, and how they

experienced the learning process. I used metaphors not only because it was different from their usual learning tools but because metaphor “is understanding and experiencing one thing in terms of another” (Larkoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 3).

Bowers (1993, p. 60) asserted, “All human thinking is both cultural and metaphorical in essence.” He argued further, that the use of metaphor drawings in teacher research in the last decade has been increasing because asking students to draw their teachers working in the classroom can be a very effective way to help teachers transform their classroom practice by reflecting on the metaphor drawing.

Derry 2005 (as cited in Tidwell & Manke, 2009) explained that drawing in self-study research can help us to not only see ourselves clearly but to also perceive others. Hence, I used a metaphor drawing to represent a critical moment that I encountered while teaching. Developing a metaphor to express my emotions at the time of experiencing the critical moment helped me to understand the events surrounding the experience. I also perceived the experience from different perspectives and this helped me to overcome the feelings of insecurity I had experienced at the time. This was because I developed the critical moment experience into a conference paper and presented it at a national university teaching and learning conference (Chapter Nine). The response I received at the conference indicated to me that my metaphor drawing awakened much interest with the conference attendees and led to deep, rich, and interesting dialogue and discussions that not only opened my vision and thinking about alternative perspectives but quieted my insecurities of arts-based representations of research.

My personal experiences with the use of metaphors and metaphor drawings makes me agree with Gillis and Johnston (2002) who believed that “through metaphor, we meet ourselves” (p. 41). They also suggested that metaphors can give teacher educators clarity about their attitudes to teaching and show them how they “perceive their students and their colleagues” (2002, p. 40). They proposed that when using metaphors in a creative way, teachers can establish their own teaching philosophies, clarify their personal aims for teaching, and get a sense of their teaching practices. As shown in Chapters Seven and Nine, I experienced how metaphors can act as “springboards for change” (2002, p. 41).

2.6.5 Video Recording

According to Talanker (2013), video recording lessons in research about professional development is not new and has developed considerably in recent years due to the efforts invested in understanding teaching, teachers' knowledge, and classroom dynamics. In addition, the technological advancements that have transformed video recording and storage, making it easily accessible and simple to use, have been instrumental in enhancing the use of video-recorded lessons for teachers' professional development (Talanker, 2013).

The main reason I videotaped my lessons with my students was to try to see where the living contradiction in my teaching manifested itself. Whitehead (1989) explained that, when watching videotapes of your lecture sessions, you get to see yourself as the living contradiction. The living contradiction becomes apparent when you think you hold certain educational values but you do not put these educational values into practice in your classroom. Whitehead added, further, that videotaping your pedagogical activities is therefore instrumental in improving your pedagogic practice. He believed that when you watch the videos, you can "reconstruct your educational theory" (p. 4) because the use of videotaped lessons allows you to make visible and discuss your educational practices with colleagues and critical friends. These colleagues and critical friends can assist you to point out areas where you are negating your educational values.

Moreover, as highlighted by Reid et al., (2015):

Video has a number of advantages over live viewing of teaching behaviour and over transcripts of lessons. Unlike watching lessons in a classroom, watching them on video makes it possible to view episodes of interest several times. They permit the representation of visual and concrete elements of teaching, as well as sound intensity, tone of voice, facial expression, chalkboard inscriptions and bodily gestures. Videos are especially useful for research because they provide the researchers, as observers, with another layer of data to work with in addition to transcripts, written lesson summaries and classroom observations. (Reid et al., 2015, pp. 367–368)

I found that video recording my lecture sessions was highly effective for improving my practice because when I recorded myself I was able to see myself as students saw me. Not only did this give me new insights into what I was doing well, but it also helped me to see the contradictions. By just watching myself, contradictions in my teaching became apparent—providing me with ample opportunity to reflect on how to improve myself and my practice. I had a prior image in my head of how I looked, sounded, and behaved, and the camera had a way of deconstructing that prior image.

When I was teaching, I felt that I was in complete control of what I said and did. I felt I was a good role model and an effective teacher. Unfortunately, what I felt and what the reality was, were two different things. Watching myself on a video recording helped show me the reality (see Chapters Seven and Eight).

Hence, I found that one of the most tried and true methods for actually seeing what I did in the classroom was to watch myself doing it on video. Videotaping my lectures and conversations with my critical friends proved useful in providing documentation because when viewing a tape repeatedly, with each viewing I focused on different aspects—stopping and rewinding and coming back to an activity that caught my attention. This gave me an opportunity to self-reflect on the improvement I wanted to make and helped me identify further areas for improvement as well as pay attention to aspects that my critical friends drew my attention to.

2.6.6 Memory Drawing

Despite my belief that I have no flair for drawing whatsoever, I took much delight in using memory drawing to depict certain aspects of my teaching activities. I understood that irrespective of how good or bad the drawing was, even if the drawings were barely legible to the outside world, to the inner workings of my mind, I was an artist (Wammes, Meade, & Fernandes, 2016). Wammes et al. made this claim based on the assumption that “drawing helps to create a more cohesive memory trace that better integrates visual, motor and semantic information” (p. 2). For example, I did a memory drawing of Mr. AK’s classroom (see Chapter Seven, Figure 7.3) and I also did a memory drawing of my own classroom (Figure 7.2). I did these because Mr. AK’s teaching style had made such an impression on me that I had visions of what his classroom would look like. The drawing I did of my classroom helped me to see the difference between my classroom and Mr. AK’s classroom thereby making the contradiction in my classroom physically visible. Although I wrote about it (Chapter Seven), I found that the contradiction in my classroom could not be explicitly explained using a narrative. I found that the drawing conveyed more tangible evidence than just speaking about the difference in our classrooms. This enhanced my research process. Similarly, Tidwell and Manke (2009) found that drawings intensified and strengthened their self-study research process.

I also did a memory drawing of a debate that took place (Figure 7.4) with my students. My students really surprised me by taking charge of the debate and executing the debate by themselves without any guidance or help from me. This provided the evidence that the purposeful pedagogies I enacted in my teaching were impacting positively on my students. I felt very proud of them and the drawing

helped me to embed the debate in my memory as advised by Wammes et al. (2016) who argued that the best way to enhance memory is by drawing.

Craik and Lockhart (1972) advised that drawing is an involved process because it involves our ability to visualise an image from an experience or from words, calling upon our previous understandings of that experience or words and then we use our motor skills to bring that image to the page. I found that the act of drawing therefore involves thorough engagement with the subject matter at hand, even if the actual drawing only took a few minutes, because whilst drawing or sketching, I memorised and reminisced.

2.6.7 Teaching Evaluations

I generated data with third-year students in 2014 in the form of a reflective questionnaire,²³ which questioned students on the most positive and negative experiences that they had had in accounting pedagogy lessons. I developed the questionnaire myself and included questions that I believed were going to generate relevant data for my study. I wanted feedback on students' experiences in order for me to identify my strengths and weaknesses in my teaching so that I could improve my practice. I believed that if I could improve my practice, my students' learning would be enhanced. I strongly felt that through student feedback, teachers learn about, reflect on, and improve their practice.

In addition, I accessed the university's annual lecturer evaluation questionnaires,²⁴ which students complete online anonymously. I found that, because the survey was anonymous, students were free to give expression to their opinions and say exactly what they felt about me as their lecturer. The survey questioned my "communicating clearly and accurately, using questioning and discussion techniques, engaging students in learning, providing feedback to students, demonstrating flexibility, and responsiveness." Finally, I asked students to assess my lectures using the assessment tool²⁵ that the university uses to assess students when they go on teaching practice. This assessment tool tested my ability to demonstrate "knowledge of content and pedagogy, knowledge of students, selecting instructional goals, designing coherent instruction, assessing student learning, establishing a culture for learning, managing classroom procedures, and managing student behaviour."

²³ An example of the reflective questionnaire can be found in Appendix Four.

²⁴ An example of the institution's annual lecturer evaluation can be found in Appendix Five.

²⁵ An example of the lesson assessment form can be found in Appendix Six.

As the Centre for Teaching and Learning: Stanford University. (1997), explained, I found that teacher evaluations can be very important because they helped me to reflect on course objectives, teaching strategies, my strengths and weaknesses as a teacher educator, and identification of the strategies for transforming practice. An advantage of teacher evaluations is the feedback received because it can prompt teachers to improve their practice given that their attention is drawn to teaching strategies, course methods, and outcomes, which impact on the learning environment (Centre for Teaching and Learning, 1997).

2.6.8 Found Poetry

Representing research as poems is a creative way of viewing and giving meaning to the aspect being explored (Sjollema, Hordyk, Walsh, Hanley, & Ives, 2012). Cahnmann (2003 p. 34) suggested that “using elements of poetry in our data collection, analysis and write-up has the potential to make our thinking clearer, fresher, and more accessible and to render the richness and complexity of the observed world.”

In writing this thesis using a creative nonfiction style, I composed a series of found poems as an introduction to each chapter. I created these poems through finding words and phrases in the text of the novel, *The Secret Garden*, and rearranging the words and phrases into poetic form (Sjollema et al., 2012). Through composing these found poems, I aimed at using creative nonfiction to involve readers in my self-study research process and also to express, creatively, my understanding of the focus of each chapter.

Crafting the found poems from the text of *The Secret Garden* was an electrifying experience for me as I chipped away the words until the most evocative words and phrases remained. I felt like a sculptor carving a piece of wood into something fabulous and creative. In experimenting with poetry, I wanted to initially demonstrate Mary’s emotional state, her helplessness and her feelings of abandonment after her parents died, the teasing ridicule she was subjected to by other children who could not understand her hostility, and her bitter attitude. Mary had never been given an opportunity to have friends or to socialise with people except the servants. Her mother kept her hidden away from society because she did not want people to know she had a child. I empathised with Mary because I had similar feelings as a child (see Chapter Three). I also felt abandoned and like a stranger in my own body. I was bitter and resentful of my friends because they had regular families and lived in a regular home environment. In the end, however, the poems that I composed

from the text in the novel, although being inspired by the emotions and situation of Mary, were also indirectly depictive of my own situations and emotions during my self-study research journey. As Richardson (2000) explained, poetry is a literary arts-based means of giving expression to the distinctiveness and the intricacies of the researcher's voice.

As Mary's story in the novel progresses, the language used in the text changes. She is no longer portrayed as a sullen, dark, and stubborn young girl but as a happy and healthy girl who has found a purpose in her life. This is evident in the poems I composed to introduce the latter chapters of this thesis, and which are symbolic of my professional learning. As I came to accept the fact that I had never been the perfect accounting pedagogy teacher educator, I also recognised the misalignment between my pedagogic practices and my teaching values. However, I was learning and taking strength from my learning and transforming not only my pedagogic practice, but transforming myself as well. Similarly, Mary was taking her strength from the magic in the secret garden, nature, her friendship with Dickon and Colin, and her association with the maid, Martha, and Martha's mother and siblings, and was transforming herself as she was learning and growing daily.

Composing found poetry helped me to understand and come to terms with my emotions and the situations I found myself in during my self-study research journey. Writing the poems allowed me to express what I felt, and putting it down in the form of the poem helped me to view my story from different perspectives. Similar to Mary who learns to overcome all the troubles in her life because she believes in herself and the restorative powers of nature, I too learned by composing found poems, to have faith in myself and trust the restorative powers of my personal and professional learning to undertake an arts-based self-study research approach.

2.6.9 Vignettes

During my research process, I was introduced to vignette development when I coauthored a book chapter with my supervisor and another colleague titled, "Learning Through Enacting Arts-Informed Self-Study Research With Critical Friends" (Hiralaal et al., in press). During the process of writing the chapter, I learned that instead of lengthy dialogues, I could use vignettes to represent the various conversations and discussions, experiences and situations that occurred during my data generation process. Intrigued by the idea of vignettes, I read further. I came to know that a vignette is a short piece of concise explanatory writing that describes an experience or retells a story (Richman & Mercer, 2002). Richman and Mercer explained further that vignettes can be very useful

when transcribing difficult and involved processes such as lengthy interviews and dialogues because they focus only on the main points of the situation or the dialogue.

Barter and Renolds (2000) found vignettes to be a helpful tool when conducting their research because it helped them to portray the complexity of the situation they were exploring. When using vignettes in her writing, Pitard (2016) found that they had “the advantage of revealing several layers of awareness in [her] writing” (para. 10). I got a much better understanding of vignettes when Pitard explained that *vignette* and *anecdote* can be used interchangeably. Vignettes show “how individuals’ thoughts, feelings, behaviours, and decisions are affected by factors that may not be easily accessible in real-life situations” (Evans, et al., 2015, p. 161).

In my self-study research, I am writing about myself as an individual, a teacher educator, and a participant in my research study. I am taking snapshots of my life and describing it. Ambler (2012) referred to this as autobiographical vignettes. She explained that writing autobiographical vignettes in teachers’ professional development can heighten learning because they promote reflection and self-study. Ambler added, further, that self-awareness is important for teachers because it sets the pattern for “what teachers know about themselves as learners and what they might learn about teaching” (p. 181). Reading and analysing the vignettes that I constructed in this thesis assisted me greatly in gaining a deeper understanding of how my lived experiences could have influenced my development.

2.6.10 Collage Portraits

Collage making in research goes beyond traditional ways of representing data as it transcends the boundaries of the conventional modes (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009a). Furthermore, Pinnegar and Hamilton argued that collage making can intensify the data analysis and representation possibilities when engaging in self-study research. They defined collage as a compilation of selected text and images that, when completed, can give the researcher a visual demonstration of an experience and create avenues for the researcher to see the experience from a more creative and novel perspective.

The term *collage* comes from the French word *coller*, which means to glue or paste something (Butler-Kisber, 2008). In the art world, it refers to a practice in which “found materials” (p. 266) for example text or photographs that could be original or constructed are then pasted onto a flat surface juxtaposing the text with the images (Butler-Kisber, 2008). McDermott (as cited in Pinnegar &

Hamilton, 2009a) cautioned that a collage is not simply paper and images pasted together but, rather, it represents a conversation between the creator and the viewers of the collage. McDermott explained further that collage making breaks down traditional ways of understanding and internalising meaning by representing innermost feelings and thoughts of the creator that words cannot express.

Dabbling in collage making, I came to know that collage and portraiture are two separate techniques of exploration and analysis, and that combining collage with portraiture is not new to the arts (Gerstenblatt, 2013). As Gerstenblatt explained, “the process of creating collage portraits provided another ‘layer of vision,’ allowing collage portraits to convey stories by weaving together words and images” (2013, p. 304). I experienced the physical process of gathering evidence, making copies of the evidence, deciding which pieces of evidence I should use, and where I would place them on the collage portraits. I found that it was a process laden with emotions, reflexive thoughts interspersed with periods of intense introspection, self-doubt about my artistic abilities, and satisfaction when it all came together. This heightened and sharpened the understanding of my learning in response to each research question (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009a).

Now, I explain the process of developing my collages to represent my personal and professional learning in response to my three research questions.

My first collage portrait.

My first collage portrait was created to represent my learning in response to my first research question on what could have influenced my role modelling as a teacher educator of accounting pedagogy. From my reading, I learned that educators’ studies of their personal histories were a major catalyst for improvement of their practice, which ultimately improved their students’ learning (Samaras, Hicks & Berger, 2004). Hence, I divided my personal history into the phases of childhood, primary school years, high school years, and my first career choice and motherhood. I selected photographs from old family albums as well as photographs that I took during my data generation process and I created a collage that I titled “Shards of Dreams” that showed the different phases in my development as distinct stages but, at the same time, shows the interrelationship between all the phases (Figure 2.5).

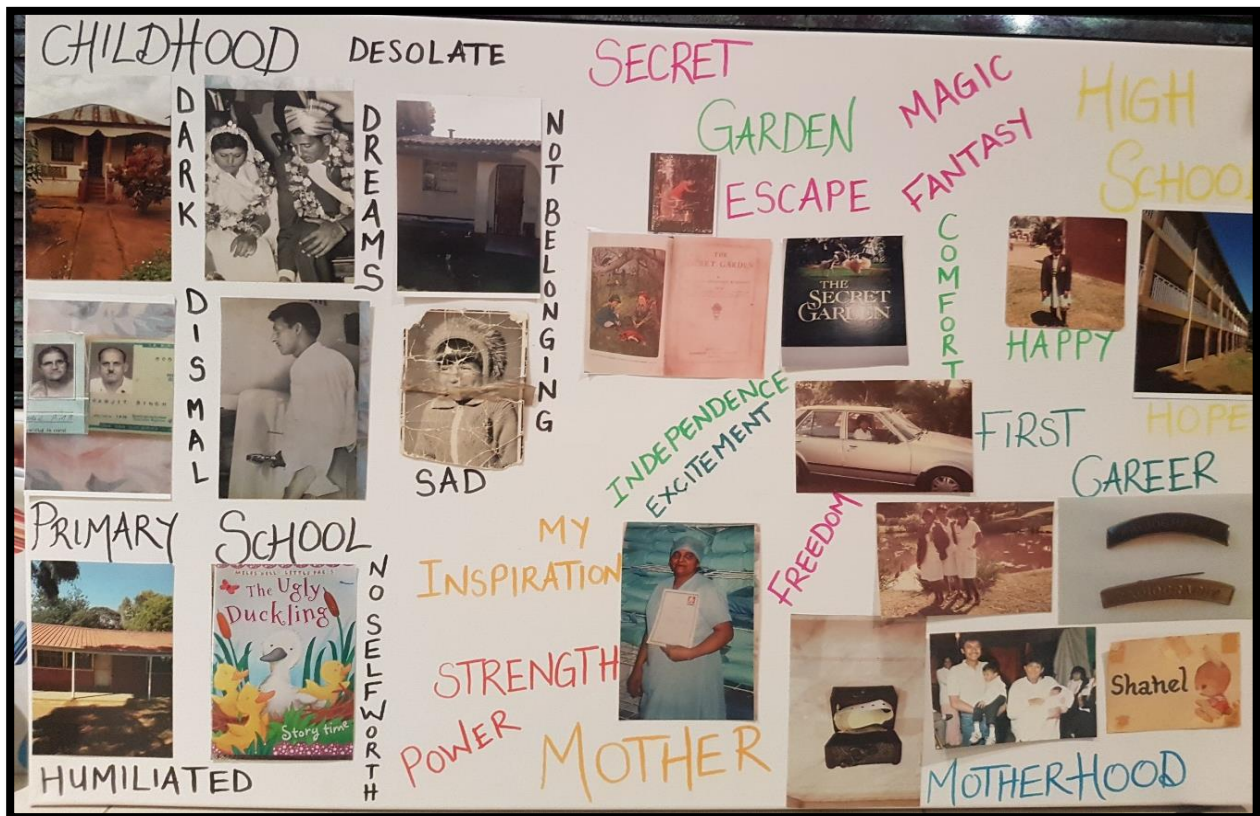


Figure 2.5 “Shards of Dreams”: My personal history collage portrait

I call the personal history collage portrait “Shards of Dreams” to represent the shattered pieces of my childhood and youth, which reminded me of splintered pieces of mirrors. Just as a mirror shatters, so the little pieces still remain intact despite the whole mirror being destroyed. My childhood was like a broken mirror, shattered into shards but not totally destroyed. On the left side of the collage are the photographs that represent my sad and desolate childhood and on the right side, the artefacts that represent the happier moments of my life. I began the collage portrait with a recent photograph that I took of the original home my parents lived in. This was special to me because it was a symbol of my parents’ short life together. The house, although neglected, is still intact and as solid as it was 55 years ago. I included a photograph of my grandparents and their home because memories of them and their home stirred bittersweet emotions within me. Below my childhood experiences on the collage, are my horrific primary school years depicted by photographs of my school and a photograph of a recent publication of the book *The Ugly Duckling* (Kelly, 2014). As explained in Chapter Three, this book was given to me as a prize for attaining first position in my Grade 2 (Class 2) year. However, what was supposed to be a joyful moment was marred by an experience that caused me to develop a low self-esteem.

I included the only tattered and torn photograph of myself as a young child. It was very disappointing when I enquired from my family if they had any photographs of me as a young child and all my mother could find was this photo. Given that I had no recollection of my father, this photograph of my father next to my photograph as a young child was the only one I managed to salvage. This was the only tangible proof I had that my father did exist at one time. At the top right hand corner, my happy high school days are depicted by photographs of my high school and me as a high school learner. Below these two photographs, are photographs of me in my radiography uniform and of my radiography badges, depicting the first career direction I pursued against my wishes. There is also a photograph of me in my first car. Next to this photograph, is a photograph of my mother in her nurse's attire. My mother is the person I admire the most and for this reason I have placed her photograph in the centre with a photograph of *The Secret Garden*. The *Secret Garden* novel is at the centre of my life and, no matter what happens in my life, I always go back to it for strength and encouragement. I take my spirit from this novel. I also included a photograph of my husband with my children when they were babies. On either side of this photograph are two photographs—one of my son's plastic hospital identity bracelet, and one of a name that the nurses in the hospital gave to him because I had not yet named him. It was pinned to his cot in the hospital when he was born. These two items are very close to my heart because they signified my son's survival.

My second collage portrait.

I developed the second collage titled "The Awakening" to portray my learning in response to my second research question on what I role modelled for my students as a teacher educator of accounting pedagogy (Figure 2.6).

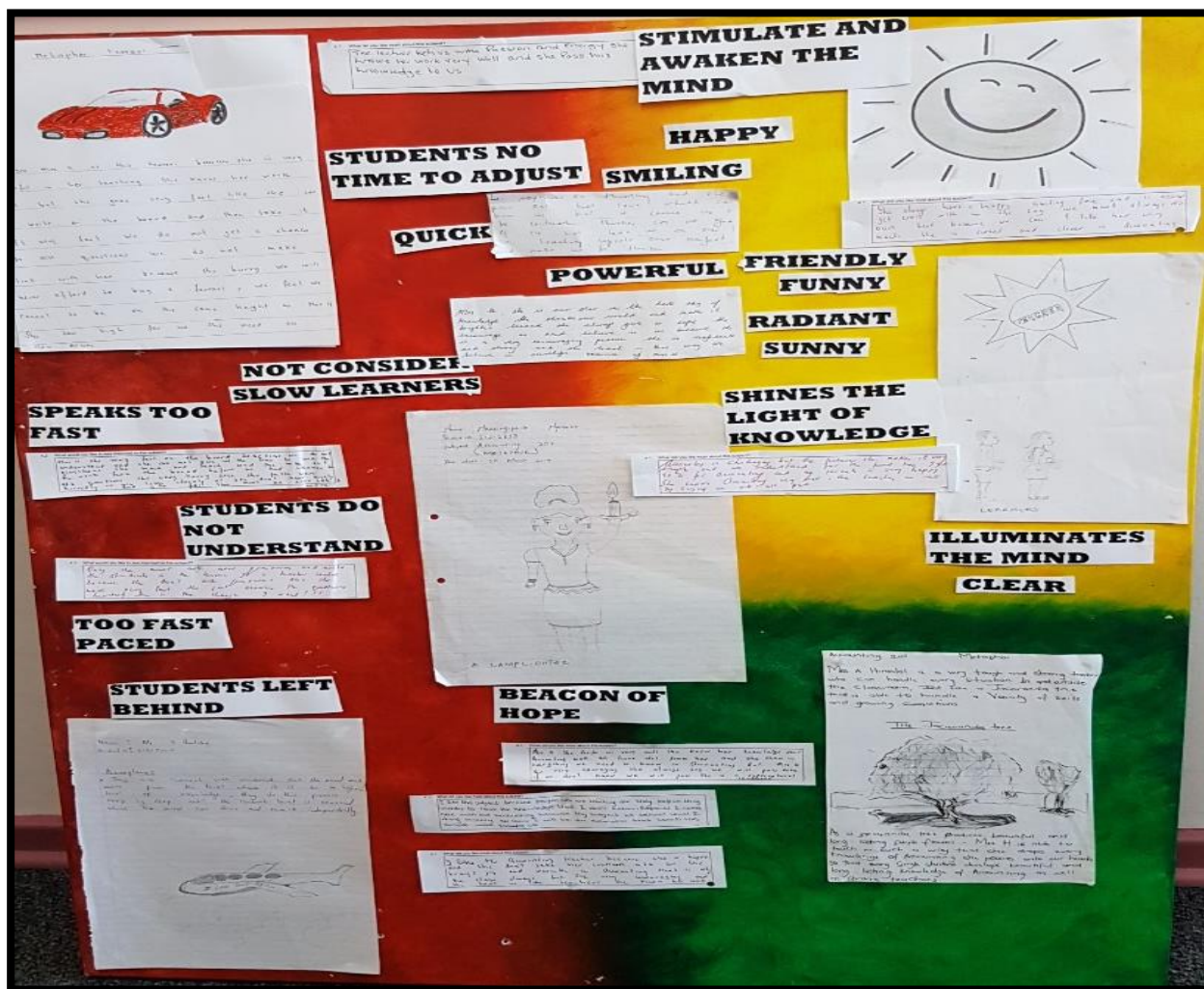


Figure 2.6 “The Awakening”: Collage portrait of my role modelling

I titled this collage portrait “The Awakening” because, after generating data with my students and critical friends, I awakened to the realisation that I was not the perfect accounting pedagogy teacher educator that I had envisaged myself to be. I created this collage portrait on an artist’s white canvas board. I divided the canvas into three sections and painted each section a different colour: red, yellow, and green. Red is a warm and positive colour and it exudes a strong powerful energy. I believed from what students told me during my data generation with them that I exuded a strong and powerful energy in my teaching. Students described me as a fast moving, fast talking teacher educator who was as vibrant and powerful as the bright red Ferrari that is shown on the section of collage painted red. Students also described me as an aeroplane and, although they did not draw an aeroplane, they wrote an explanation of why they regarded me as an aeroplane. Students said I am

like an aeroplane because I do not waste time, I move through the accounting content very fast, which is good because we finish the work in record time. On the other hand, they also saw the negative in that I rush through the work and some students get left behind. They said that after a lesson, they have to take some time out and sit quietly by themselves and, in their heads, go through the lesson to try and grasp the content. I placed this aeroplane explanation below the Ferrari metaphor on the section of the portrait painted a lighter shade of red. In the metaphor drawing of me as the sun, students described me as having a sunny, warm, and friendly disposition. I pasted this metaphor drawing on the section of the collage that was painted yellow. Closely related to the metaphor of me as the sun, is the metaphor of me as a star shining over the students, illuminating their minds. I placed this metaphor drawing on the yellow portion of the collage. The yellow symbolises sunshine, warmth, growth, and happiness. On the portion of the collage painted green, I placed the metaphor drawing of me as a jacaranda tree. Students said that, like the jacaranda tree, I have strong roots and I, in turn, develop strong teachers who can withstand the storm of teaching. In the centre of the collage is the metaphor drawing of me as a lamplighter. I placed this drawing in the centre of the collage because the students said I light up their lives. I placed it in the centre because all the other colours join each other and overlap in the centre. As a lamplighter, the students said I lead the way—which encompasses light from the yellow portion, growth from the green portion, and passion and energy from the red portion.

My third collage portrait.

My third collage was developed to answer my third research question: “How can I develop as a more productive role model for my students?” I called this collage portrait “Rise of the Phoenix” (Figure 2.7) to portray my reinventing myself just as the mythical phoenix arose from the ashes; I also arose from the realisation that I needed to improve my pedagogic practice. And I realised at the end of my self-study process, that there was never going to be an end to my reinvention. It was a dynamic process and I will never come to a point and stop. I will be learning and reinventing myself all the time.

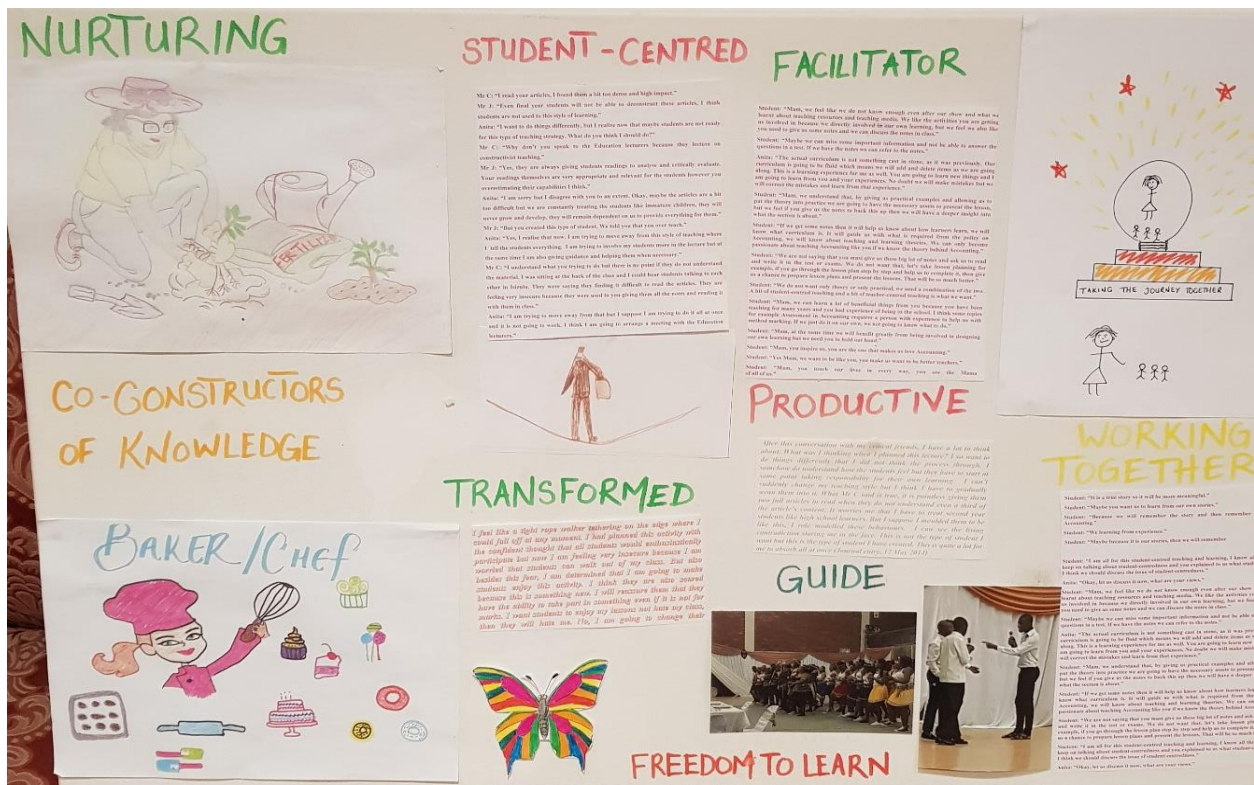


Figure 2.7 “Rise of the Phoenix: Collage portrait of my reinventing self

At the top left hand corner, is a student metaphor drawing of me as a gardener. Students said they drew me as a gardener because I am sowing the seeds of knowledge. In discussions with students, they commented that, like the gardener, I was not absolutely sure that what I planted would grow. Maybe it will die completely, maybe it will sprout a few leaves or a few flowers, or sometimes it will flourish and be abundant with flowers. There were many factors that could impact on the growth potential of the flowers. Likewise, enacting social constructivist purposeful pedagogies, I was not sure whether it would be very successful or not. Nevertheless, students commented that there was a change and the change was for the better.

Below the metaphor drawing of me as a gardener, is a metaphor drawing of me as a baker. Students commented that a baker combines various ingredients together to make a cake. The ingredients have to be of the correct quantities in order to bake a tasty cake—I was like the baker. I had to select the choicest teaching strategies, combine these with the best ingredients, and use the most effective utensils in order to get the desired results.

Towards the centre of the collage is the metaphor drawing of a tightrope walker that I did (Chapter Nine) to represent a critical moment that occurred in my teaching. This critical moment was

profoundly significant in my attempt at enacting purposeful pedagogies. At the bottom of the collage portrait next to the drawing of the baker metaphor, is a student drawing of a butterfly. Students explained that before the butterfly becomes a butterfly, it was a caterpillar. Then, once it spins itself a cocoon to protect it, it transforms into a beautiful colourful butterfly. Students drew this metaphor to represent the visible change they could see in my teaching strategies. When I adopted a social constructivist approach, students got the freedom to learn—depicted by the photographs of a show they had arranged in which a sketch and mock Zulu wedding were included. The two photographs captured this event.

At the top right hand corner, is a student metaphor drawing showing me and the students working together. The caption says “Taking the Journey Together,” which, students explained to me, is my transforming self. My reinvented self is the one that takes students’ voices into account and we work together and make decisions together. The metaphor drawing shows me holding the hands of students and walking together with them. They drew me as the larger person in the picture because students explained that I was the one leading and guiding them. This was what I wanted to achieve with my social constructivist approach—not to leave students alone but to guide and lead them towards enlightenment. The light bulb that is drawn in this scenario depicts the enlightenment that I was leading them towards.

Apart from the metaphor drawings in this collage portrait, I included typed copies of my reflections on my teaching, reflections on my conversations with critical friends, reflections on the peer-reviewed feedback of the paper I developed on the critical moment in my teaching activities, and reflections on my presentation of my critical moment conference paper at a teaching and learning conference.

2.7 Mystery and Magic²⁶

In *The Secret Garden*, when Archibald Craven comes back home from his travels and finds his invalid son Colin walking by himself, looking tall, athletic and bursting with energy and spirit, he cannot believe it. He is even more surprised when Colin tells him about Mary and Dickon and how they found the key to the secret garden and revived the garden. *The Secret Garden* was my favourite childhood novel because it was like a fairy tale, full of magic and mystery—and I gave this section the heading “Mystery and Magic” because the section is about using children’s fiction as a creative nonfiction device for telling my story.

²⁶ “Mystery and magic and wild creatures, the weird midnight meeting” (Burnett, 1969, p. 241).

Although some might argue that fairy tales and children's fiction have nothing to do with reality and experience, Zipes (2012) vehemently argued that fairy tales and children's fiction are linked to, and representative of, real-life experiences. Zipes (2012) claimed that we often brush off fairy tales because:

They tell more truth than we want to know, and we absorb fairy tales because they tell us more truth than we want to know. They are filled with desire and optimism and drip with brutality, bluntness, violence and perversity, they expose the untruths and at best are bare, brusque and concise. (p. 1)

Zipes (2007) also pointed out that people believed in fairy tales in ancient times, and he drew a comparison with modern day belief in religion. He argued that while fairy tales are not based on a particular religious belief, fairy tales are informed by human beings' desire to change the world to make it more habitable for them to live in, and transform themselves in order to fit into this changed world. Likewise, Weber and Mitchell (1995) maintained that fictional work such as novels can portray not only our own personal innermost desires and emotions, our work situations, and our experiences but can also shed light on those of our family, students, peers, friends, and associates. Weber and Mitchell elaborated further that fiction writers do not write or exist in an empty space because their interactions with others and their lived experiences infiltrate their writing and their stories (1995).

Furthermore, Weber and Mitchell (1995) argued that teachers are shaped by the "memory and myth—fantasy and fiction which have constructed [their] childhood for [them] and which have then allowed [them] to scrutinise and revisit the contradictions that those fictions embody" (p. xi). This point has a special appeal for me as I explain in Chapter Three; I reconstructed my childhood personal history in parallel to the storyline of *The Secret Garden*. By returning to the novel as a creative nonfiction device in writing this thesis, I have been able to scrutinise and revisit the contradictions and challenges in my personal history and my professional learning.

Significantly, I came to see how, as Weber and Mitchell (1995) highlighted, fictional influences are never totally lost. Gilman (as cited in Weber & Mitchell, 1995) explained that whilst images from the past may change over time, they will never completely vanish because the present is intertwined with the past of which we may not be aware. Thus, from time to time, popular fictional characters

and stories from the past are subtly interjected within the modern works (Gilman, 1985). Gilman claimed that this happens because present day writers are influenced by fictional work that they experienced in their childhoods.

Zipes (2012) elaborated that children's fiction and fantasy writing can provide us with "extraordinary hope" (p. 1). Similarly, as a young child, I was drawn to the children's novel, *The Secret Garden*, and as an adult, the novel still holds the same appeal for me because of the similarity of the fictional life experiences of the central character, Mary Lennox, with my past lived experiences. Having lost both her parents, Mary comes to live with her uncle as an ill-tempered neglected child, but the secret garden soothes her and helps her to piece her life back together again. Colin, a selfish, bedridden, and sickly child is transformed by the garden, and he eventually finds solace and happiness through the garden. I, too, sought solace in *The Secret Garden* when life became too overwhelming for me. In writing my personal history narrative, I have come to see how the novel acted as a therapeutic mechanism because it shielded me from the reality of my troubled world and it is for this reason that I fashioned my thesis in alignment with the story of Mary and the secret garden.

Nevertheless, I experienced some distressing moments when I found aligning the factual data with the fictional life experiences of the heroine in *The Secret Garden* challenging because I was new to the genre of creative nonfiction writing. However, as I consulted literature on this form of writing, I was reassured by authors who described creative nonfiction in such gripping and compelling ways. For instance, Gutkind (n.d.) advised:

In some ways, creative nonfiction is like jazz—it's a rich mix of flavours, ideas, and techniques, some of which are newly invented and others as old as writing itself. Creative nonfiction can be an essay, a journal article, a research paper, a memoir, or a poem; it can be personal or not, or it can be all of these.

I found that taking snapshots of my lived experiences and comparing them with the fictional life experiences of the protagonist in *The Secret Garden* gave my writing much more depth and meaning. At times, whilst writing about my personal history, I became very emotional and I wanted to write in a way such that my emotions could be felt by the readers of my work. However, my early drafts of the writing were dispassionate, inexpressive, and detached from the actual experience. When I equated my lived experiences with those of the fictional life experiences of the heroine, Mary, my

writing became more expressive, demonstrative, and emotional. Borich (2013) had similar thoughts when she described creative nonfiction as a type of writing that can be from memory, especially with autobiographies, when the author takes snatches from her world. Despite the fact that she agreed with Gutkind (2008) that creative nonfiction can take the form of poetry, stories, a memoir, or an essay, Borich was quick to add that in creative nonfiction, writing that is selective, the “I” who is the author is vividly present in the writing whilst at the same time facts are also present. She explicitly mentioned this point because she explained that creative nonfiction can be public or private writing.

In writing my thesis, my aim was to explore and depict the profound experiences of my life that have shaped the person and teacher educator I have become so that I could better understand them. When exploring literature on how I could use a creative nonfiction device for doing this, I found that different writers use creative nonfiction writing for different reasons. For instance, Gutkind (n.d.) explained that he writes in this way to spread information that can be understood, and the feminist writer, bell hooks, explained that she wrote her creative nonfiction memoir, *Bone Black* (1999), in order to bring her past to the front.

During my writing process, I found that a feeling of uncertainty, and the ambivalent nature of presenting fact and fiction together, gave me a particular edge of expectancy and ambiguity, a thrilling feeling of being animated and stirred to write. Barone (2008) reassured me that despite long-standing traditions of representing research data in more conventional ways, many researchers in the social sciences have championed the challenges they faced in representing their data in creative ways by aligning facts alongside fiction. I was further comforted by Barone (2008) who added that the improbability of presenting fact and fiction together is what gives social science research the excitement that is now being embraced in research studies instead of being avoided. Borrowing the analogy from Gutkind (n.d.), I delightedly imagined my writing to be a jazz ensemble and in this way managed to juxtapose fact and fiction as I represented a version of myself in my context at certain points.

2.8 Ethical Issues

I was faced with ethical challenges throughout my self-study research process because I was personally involved in the research process. I found it helpful to keep the suggestions of Brandenburg and Gervasoni (2012) in mind. They advised that self-study researchers should make a list of possible ethical challenges that might arise during the self-study research process. The

researcher should then deal with each ethical problem as it arises, and document the procedure in order to assist other self-study researchers. They called this “ethical praxis” (2012, p. 183).

Firstly, Samaras (2011) emphasised that all participants in self-study research must be protected and informed of their rights. As soon as my research proposal was accepted, I had to submit an application to the ethics committee of the institution where I was registered for my doctoral studies, to conduct this study. I also had to seek consent for my students to be part of the study from the head of the school of education at the institution where the study was enacted. She was referred to as the “gatekeeper” because her job was to protect the students.

In my application to the head of the school of education, I had to ensure that the following conditions would be adhered to. Firstly, I had to make sure that confidentiality of the students would not be breached. Confidentiality meant that no student’s personal information would be revealed. I therefore undertook to disregard any personal information that was not closely related to my research questions (Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Shoghi, & Cheraghi, 2014). I also confirmed that the students’ identities would be protected at all times by not using their names but referring to them as students in dialogues and conversations in which they participated. In certain circumstances, pseudonyms were given to students.

My critical friends in my department at the school of education were informed about the research by the head of department that I will be conducting research in the school of education which will require their input and feedback., authorising me to audiotape and videotape our conversations and discussions. I agreed to also maintain confidentiality and anonymity of my critical friends. Their names were not used, but pseudonyms were given to them instead. However, I did use the real names of some of my critical friends in the TES project group because this was agreed by participants in this project.

Another issue that I was wary and mindful of was manipulating my student participants to try to get the results that I desired in my research. This was a difficult ethical issue to address and, when generating my data, I ensured that I kept detailed records and videotapes of the raw data that was generated—which could be produced to indicate no manipulation of data occurred to reach the desired results. This was a strictly qualitative study and detailed accounts of data generating tools were provided.

Alongside the exploration of my pedagogic practice, I delved into an exploration of my personal history to fathom how my personal lived experiences could possibly have influenced my professional development. This “intimate scholarship” (Hamilton 2005, as cited in Hamilton & Pinnegar, 2014) refers to certain intimate and highly personal aspects of my life that previously were undisclosed. According to Warusznski:

The relationship and intimacy that is established between the researcher and participants in qualitative studies can raise a range of different ethical concerns, and qualitative researchers face dilemmas such as respect for privacy, establishment of honest and open interactions, and avoiding misrepresentations. (2002, p. 152)

Ellis (2007) referred to the ethical responsibility we have to close others who we include in our work about ourselves as *relational ethics*. Relational ethics calls for researchers to “think from our hearts and minds, acknowledge our interpersonal bonds to others, and take responsibility for actions and their consequences” (Ellis, 2007, p. 4). Ellis also highlighted some of the ethical issues involved in writing about those whom we have a close relationship with—relational ethics should pay attention to regard for others’ feelings and should respect their confidentiality while at the same time paying careful attention to the relationship between the researcher and the person or persons being researched.

Despite keeping these precautions in mind, when I generated data with my students and my close family members, sometimes questions were posed that placed me in very awkward positions, for example, when students asked me whether I was using them for my own personal research by videotaping the lectures. This happened when I involved students in an online discussion board activity but did not grade students (see Chapter Nine). They were initially angry with me, and claimed that I was using them; but my intentions were also to offer them an improved pedagogic experience. I explained that I wanted them to engage with this online activity because I wanted them to improve their use of technology-mediated learning.

When students questioned me about videotaping my lectures, I started a practice of videotaping the lessons they presented to each other in class. I asked them to bring along a memory stick, download the video, and then view themselves teaching. On questioning them about the value of videotaping their lessons, students informed me that it was a very valuable exercise because, for the first time, they viewed themselves teaching. They said that the videotapes made them aware of their strengths

and limitations in the classroom and it was an excellent learning experience for them. I then explained that, for me, it was also a very good learning experience because I could watch myself and focus on areas that needed improvement in my teaching. I emphasised that my improvement would make me a more effective teacher educator which, in turn, would benefit them as my students.

Asking my family for old photographs and engaging them in discussions about my childhood posed a few ethical dilemmas for me. Initially, when I explained to my family about writing my thesis, they were excited and went out of their way to send me old photographs. My family do not live in the same town as me; half my family live in Gauteng, another province in South Africa, and the other half live in the Eastern Cape, also another province in South Africa. So eager were my family in supporting me, they actually sent me the photographs with a courier. However, at a family gathering during the course of my data generation process, members of my family asked me what I was going to write about them. One family member said, “I hope you are not going to say bad things about us, because then I will be upset.”

I did not answer that person but said that when my thesis was almost complete, they would all be welcome to read it because I wrote about my personal history, knowing that my family were potential readers. That seemed to have placed some of them at ease because I had sensed discomfort when the question was asked. I told them it is a self-study and it is all about my learning. I explained that I included my childhood stories to see whether my childhood experiences could have influenced the person I have become. Furthermore, like Ellis (2007), I was keeping the memory of people alive by writing about them. I reassured my family that, in writing about them in my thesis, I would keep their memories alive and maybe, years from now, the younger children in the family would read my thesis and learn more about the family.

2.9 Trustworthiness

To give validity and trustworthiness to the assumptions and claims that Whitehead (1989) made, he explained that the research must be subjected to public criticism. Whitehead (1989, 2008) drew from Polanyi’s *Personal Knowledge* (1958) when he posed the question on the trustworthiness of the researcher and the validity of the research. Polanyi (1958, p. 6) commented that “in every act of knowing there enters a passionate contribution of the person knowing what is being known, and that this coefficient is no mere imperfection but a vital component of his knowledge.” Whilst this quote may appear rather complex, when I read Polanyi’s work I came to realise what he meant. He explained that not every claim to knowledge has to be scientifically proven, or be objective. If this

was the requirement for all knowledge produced, then people would spend millions of years and still not complete the process of claiming objectivity in all knowledge. When a researcher makes a claim, she is basing her claim on what she regards as the truth.

Whitehead (1989) justified his construction of Living Educational Theory on Polyani's belief that researchers' claims to knowledge are based on their own experiences and their own professional development in their own context. This satisfies the need that their work is original and that they understand the outside world from their "own point of view" (p. 46) and their own experiences. Whitehead laid claim to his work being valid because he carried out his research in an organised methodical manner, his claims to the knowledge he produced are justified—he accommodated tenets of the traditional disciplines of education, all assumptions and claims that he made are justified and, finally, he adopted a "critical and enquiring approach to an educational problem" (1989, p. 46).

Feldman (2003) advised that, when undertaking self-study of teacher education practice, we have a "moral obligation" (p. 27) to not only ensure that our work has value and is of an acceptable standard but to also to ensure that our work has validity. Feldman claimed that the reason for this is that our work in self-study has practical consequences because we want it to have an impact on schools, teachers, and students. Hence, it is imperative for self-study researchers to confirm that their work is "well-grounded" (p. 28) and enables us to answer our research questions. Feldman explained, further, that when undertaking self-study of teacher education practices, the focus should not only be on improving our practice but on transforming ourselves. Feldman suggested that one way of achieving validity is by giving detailed explanations of how we generated our data, the research methods that were used, and how change took place.

As explained previously, to answer my research questions, I generated data using various methods. Eisner (1991) claimed that creating artistic representations of our self-study work and making it public contributed to the validation of its existence in the world, while Feldman (2003) suggested validity can be achieved by providing in-depth details on how representations of data were constructed (Chapter Two). The data were being analysed throughout the representation process because I analysed them in their original form, and then I analysed them again when I was planning how to set that data on the collage portrait. A third analysis occurred when I was crafting my thesis using a creative nonfiction style. To add to the trustworthiness of my study, I represented the data on collage portraits, which made my data come alive.

Furthermore, Northfield and Loughran (1997) stated that self-study researchers should provide evidence of how they have changed as a result of the research. Feldman (2003) explained we can do this by making our explorations clear, and subject our work to self-critique and scrutiny by others. For example, as shown in Chapter Nine, to lend more to the validity and believability of my work, I shared one of my metaphor drawings with conference attendees for critique and support (Samaras, 2011). I received constructive feedback from the conference attendees who were not in my professional area of expertise, teacher education. Evidence of my ongoing transformation was presented as clearly as I could when I crafted my thesis using a creative nonfiction style. I also involved my critical friends in dialogue and discussions about my learning. The insight I got from this intensive critical analytical process (Richardson, 2000) contributed to me re-envisioning myself and, consequently, my teaching practice.

Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009b) cautioned that there are three key requirements that must be satisfied to warrant a study being part of the self-study of practice research category. Firstly, the “claim for trustworthiness” (p. 203) must be based on self-study as a phenomenon that exists in the world rather than being regarded as a theory of knowledge with regard to its methods, the scope, and the beliefs and opinions of those engaged in self-study research. In this study, I was positioned as a teacher educator exploring my pedagogy in order to get a better understanding of what I role modelled for my students in accounting pedagogy. I had envisaged that, with this study, not only would I be able to develop as a more productive role model for my students but I would be able to make an informed contribution to the scholarly discourse on teacher education.

Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) alerted me to the fact that researchers in other fields of research were highly critical of the probability of personal bias in this type of research. Hence, it was recommended that my research process be well documented to address the issue of potential bias. I therefore became mindful that, despite the alluring nature of self-study research, it was necessary for me to regularly monitor what I was doing, how I was doing it, and why I was doing it. Not only did this process assist me in minimising personal bias, it contributed to a better understanding of self-study of practice research. This gave my learning from my self-study research process credibility so that others in the self-study research environment could learn from my learning (Samaras & Freese, 2006).

As a self-study researcher, I understood that I performed two roles in this study: as the researcher and as the researched, which was a natural occurrence with self-study of practice (Samaras, 2011).

Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009b) explained this as a double-sided perspective. During my research process, I got into my practice and looked at it from inside out and, at times, I looked at it from the outside in. In this way, I gained a holistic view of my educational practice, which was a meaningful way of examining my practice. I considered many angles that would render my research valid and trustworthy so that it would be trusted by the teacher education community and self-study research circle.

2.10 Research Challenges

Initially, I was very insecure about using an arts-based approach to self-study. I thought that my work would have to be professional and I felt I lacked the artistic flair for drawing or painting. But, having read Gerstenblatt (2013) and Butler-Kisber (2008), I understood that there was no need for any prior artistic experience. I learned that creativity was not only about painting and drawing but that creativity involved the innovative ways I could reimagine myself and my practice to create the most conducive learning environment for my students' learning (Samaras, 2010).

Although, in the school of education where I work, I managed to find the two most supportive and encouraging critical friends that I could have hoped for, time and their own teaching responsibilities prevented them from being available to attend more of my lectures and hold discussions with me thereafter. Also, it took much cajoling on my part to initially convince them to be my critical friends because they had no experience with self-study research, and did not understand the requirements of the self-study process, I found that, sometimes, Mr. C focused more on my subject content because he had previous experience of lecturing the subject. I had to work around him by first speaking about the problems he saw with the content and thereafter we spoke about my teaching styles.

What I also found rather limiting in my research process was to record my reflections while my lectures were in progress. Sometimes a valuable point was made or a significant moment occurred and I had no time to record it immediately in my journal. Nevertheless, having the videotapes really assisted me in re-experiencing my teaching activities. The video recording of my lessons also presented a challenge for me because I could not teach and record a lesson at the same time. I used an iPad to record lessons and I would have to get a student who was not having a lecture to assist me, which was not always possible. Sometimes, the student assisting me did not focus the camera correctly so that when I analysed the tapes, the sound and images were distorted, which interfered with my analysis.

The other challenges occurred in my personal life. The year I commenced my doctoral study, 2011, my husband passed away. It was a devastating time in my life and, when other students who had registered for doctoral studies were preparing and defending their proposals, I was in a state of mourning. All the rituals involved with death also consumed a lot of time. When I did have the strength and courage to get back to my studies, I felt alone because my peers had moved on in their studies. Fortunately, the empathy, support, and encouragement as well as understanding from my supervisor got me back on track.

I had applied for sabbatical leave, which was granted from June 2015 to December 2015. In July 2015, I suffered a debilitating stroke that affected my focus. My sabbatical leave was spent on occupational therapy and psychological counselling because the stroke had also resulted in me going into a state of depression. Just when I had managed to get back onto my feet, in January 2016, a close companion who had been my tower of strength suffered an aneurysm and passed away in my presence. Only the encouragement of my family and my spirituality forced me to face my troubles. During this period, as was the norm in my life, I reverted to my trusted companion, the novel *The Secret Garden*. When I read the novel again, it transported me back to the magic world of the secret garden and the excerpt upon which my entire study revolved:

In each century since the beginning of the world wonderful things have been discovered. In the last century more amazing things were found out than in any century before. In this new century hundreds of things still more astounding will be brought to light. At first people refuse to believe that a strange new thing can be done, then they begin to hope it can be done, then they see it can be done—then it is done and all the world wonders why it was not done centuries ago. (Burnett, 1969, p. 137)

I saw my troubles not as obstacles but challenges for me. This renewed my faith in myself and I regained my confidence to work on my doctoral study with vigour and a transformed attitude.

2.11 She Slipped Through the Door and Shut It Behind Her—Excitement, Wonder and Delight²⁷

When Mary eventually opens the door to the secret garden, she slips through and shuts it behind her. She experiences such strong emotions that she trembles. I used the words “She Slipped Through the Doors and Shut It Behind Her—Excitement, Wonder and Delight” as a heading for this section to express my own delight and wonder and, also, trepidation at having identified an apt methodological approach to undertake my study.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a step-by-step detailed account of how I conducted this study—from start to finish. I explained why choosing a self-study of practice research methodological approach was the most appropriate research method to generate the relevant data to enable me to respond adequately to my three research questions. I made it known that I was the main participant in the study but I was not alone. I was studying myself in relation to my practice. Therefore, it was necessary for me to give a detailed explanation of the significant others who were part of my practice, namely, my students and my critical friends. I identified the two main critical friends, Mr. C and Dr. J, who worked with me in the same department on a daily basis. Apart from providing biographical details about them, I also demonstrated how they performed their roles as critical friends to me, and the contribution they made to my daily teaching activities, my transformation process, and my life. I explained how my critical friends in the TES project group also made a significant contribution to my growth and development during my research study. They provided me with the necessary support and encouragement while at the same time critiquing my research work in a gentle, caring, soothing manner, which made me very comfortable with my self-study research.

I also provided a detailed exposition of the variety of research practices that I used to generate, represent, and analyse data for my study. I described how I wrote a comprehensive narrative using *The Secret Garden* novel as a creative nonfiction device for constructing this thesis, and I related this to other works where writers have used children’s fiction and fairy tales as creative devices for relating the facts of their lived experiences. Then I showed how I confronted the ethical aspects that presented themselves during my research. I next showed how I achieved trustworthiness for my

²⁷ “Then she slipped through it, and shut it behind her, and stood with her back against it, looking about her and breathing quite fast with excitement, and wonder and delight” (Burnett, 1969, p. 63).

research methodology. I concluded this chapter with a description of the challenges that I encountered during my research process and I showed how I overcame these challenges.

I began this chapter with a free verse poem from the words in the text of the novel which demonstrated how initially I shut myself off from questioning my pedagogical practice because I was under the impression that I was the perfect accounting pedagogy teacher educator. This chapter demonstrated how self-study research “opened my eyes” (Burnett, 1969, p. 15) to the various ways I could explore what might have influenced my role modelling as a teacher educator of accounting pedagogy, what I role model for my students, and how I could develop as a more productive role model for my students. In keeping with the creative construction of this thesis, I learned how other writers have used children’s nonfiction as creative nonfiction devices for telling their stories. Writing this chapter also helped me to confront and overcome my insecurities about using an arts-based self-study research approach to gather, represent, and analyse the relevant data I generated to address my research questions.

In the next chapter, I begin with my personal history narrative, providing details about my lived experiences from birth through to childhood.

CHAPTER THREE: THERE IS NO ONE LEFT²⁸

*Forgotten by all
Never belonged to anyone
Nobody is left
You are going home Mary
But where is home? asked Mary²⁹*

3.1 It Is so Very Bad³⁰

I began this personal history chapter with the heading, “There Is No One Left,” because it denoted both Mary’s and my circumstances. In *The Secret Garden*, the protagonist, Mary Lennox, is forgotten in the house she shares with her parents and a multitude of servants. However, after her parents as well as a number of the servants die, everybody else runs away. Mary is the only one left in the house, and experiences feelings of abandonment and desolation at the thought that no one even bothered to look for her. I had similar emotions when my father passed away and my mother, sister, and I were forced to leave our home and move to my mother’s parents’ home in another town.

I extracted words and phrases from the chapter with the same name in the novel, *The Secret Garden*, and constructed a free verse poem because these words expressed the melancholy gloominess of my life as a young child—which parallels that of Mary’s fictional life experiences. I began this introductory section with the phrase, “It Is so Very Bad” because it symbolises the circumstances I was placed in. In *The Secret Garden*, these words are uttered by Mary’s mother, imploringly, to the young police officer who brings the news that everyone is dying of cholera in the village. This is all that Mary’s mother could say because she still believed she was untouchable—but she and her husband died a few hours later, leaving Mary all alone to face the world.

In the previous chapter, I explained why I chose to use *The Secret Garden* as a creative nonfiction device for composing this thesis. I discussed the research methodology I adopted and shared information about the context in which the study took place. I introduced my research participants, my critical friends, and the contribution they made to my study. I provided a detailed account of

²⁸ “There Is No One Left” (Burnett, 1969, p. 1).

²⁹ “‘You are going to be sent home,’ Basil said to her, ‘at the end of the week. And we’re glad of it.’ ‘I’m glad of it, too,’ answered Mary. ‘Where is home?’” (Burnett, 1969, p. 8).

³⁰ “Is it so very bad? Oh is it?” Mary heard her say” (Burnett, 1969, p. 3).

every research practice I used to generate data for my study, and reasons for selecting these practices. I described the ethical issues that presented themselves during this study and demonstrated how I derived trustworthiness for my research methodology. I highlighted the challenges that confronted me during the study and explained how I overcame them.

Samaras (2011) explained that if I want to get to know and understand myself better, and reflect on my learning, writing about my personal history is one way of examining how my past experiences could have informed my development as a teacher educator. Furthermore, Samaras, Hicks & Berger (2004) suggested that adopting a personal history self-study method would provide me with the opportunity to explore how my life history and my past learning experiences could have played a role in moulding and shaping me into the teacher educator I have become. Hence, in this chapter, I discuss my personal lived experiences from birth through to childhood.

I was born on 1 June, in the mid-1960s, at St Aiden's hospital in Durban, the first child to my father and mother. Two years later, my parents were blessed with another girl. Sadly, my father suffered a cerebral aneurism and died at the age of 34 years old, leaving my mother a widow at the age of 25. My sister was just 19 days old, and I was two years old. I believe I was quite a problematic baby—having been born with a very weak chest, I constantly got chest infections. My mother was always taking me to clinics and doctors and even resorted to spiritual healers in the hope of getting me healed. However, after my father passed on, my mother was emotionally traumatised and I somehow got stronger and healthier on my own. Maybe at such a young age, I could sense that my mother was in no fit state to be caring for a sick child, as well as a new-born baby, without a husband.

During my data-generating process, whilst contemplating how I was going to represent my early childhood, a very sad and alarming realisation dawned on me. I did not have a single photograph or object from my younger years, before school, that I could use as my artefact. On enquiring with my mother and other members of my family, it seemed that no one had anything, not even an item of clothing, photograph, or toy of mine. I did manage to get a very tattered and torn photograph from my mother, but this was from when I was a little older (Figure 3.1).



Figure 3.1 Only photograph of me as a young child

When I looked at this photograph, the tattered and torn pieces of it were depictive of my childhood. My life was torn and shattered when my father's death occurred. My mother took my sister and me and relocated from Durban to Pietermaritzburg because she was literally chased out of her parents-in-law's home. They felt that she needed to now become her parents' responsibility because she had two little children, she did not work outside the home, and would become a burden to the family. Our little family was lost—we did not know where we were going. My mother had no idea what was going to become of us so she returned to her maternal home and was forced to do menial tasks like housekeeping to sustain us because her parents were average income earners. Nevertheless, it was a very significant moment for me to find out that no one ever bothered to take a photograph of me or my sister because we were just two children forced to live with family because of circumstances. Probably, if my father had lived, he would have made the time to take photographs of us.

I felt like Mary Lennox in the novel. I never felt I belonged to anyone or to a family who would take the time to capture important moments of my life. This affected me as an adult when I had my own family. I took videos and photographs all the time and did not know why I had this obsession; but reflecting on this photograph has made me realise I did not want my children to look back one day and feel as I felt when I looked at this photograph.

3.2 What Desolation³¹

In *The Secret Garden*, the police eventually find Mary, alone and scared, in her desolate home. This resonated with me because when I saw my parents' old home it was empty and unoccupied. I had those same feelings of desolation. My mother had taken us to this home when we were children but it was quite a shock for me when, during my data generating process, I went to the house again. It was neglected and empty with only the structure intact. Everything else, including the people from the house, was gone. Below is a photograph of the house as it is now (Figure 3.2).



Figure 3.2 My parents' original home

³¹ "What desolation!" she heard one voice say" (Burnett, 1969, p. 5).

I took this photograph on 24 June, 2015. The photograph shows how old this house really is; yet, the house is still solid and has not fallen apart structurally. Obviously, over the years, my father's family lived in the house but I was told by the neighbours that, for the past two years, the house had remained unoccupied, which was the reason for the state of the surroundings. This photograph made me think of my mother. Despite all she has been through, she, like the house, has aged but she has not disintegrated or fallen apart structurally. Despite the fact that it made me sad to see this house unoccupied and left derelict and lonely, I am fulfilled in that I can see physical evidence of my parents' history still standing as it did when they were together.

3.3 Poor Little Kid³²

I gave this section a title using words from *The Secret Garden*. I felt just as Mary Lennox did, poor little kid, because I knew no one was going to come and rescue me because, in reality, there was no one. I was on my own and I felt sorry for myself. My emotions were so intense whilst I was writing this narrative that I felt glad I was too young at that time to remember the emotional trauma. I decided to reconstruct the events of my parents' history in the hope that I could view the situation from a different perspective. I began with this photograph of my parents' wedding (Figure 3.3).



Figure 3.3 My parents' wedding

³² ““Poor little kid!” he said, ‘there is no one left to come’” (Burnett, 1969, p. 5).

This photograph, I got from my mother's old wedding album. When I looked at it, it brought happy and sad thoughts to look at my mother and father on their wedding day. I tried to imagine what thoughts must have been going through their minds. I made up stories in my head that they must have been planning a life ahead, and that my sister and I were part of the plan. I imagined that they were joyously happy and, when I was born, they were ecstatic. I made myself believe that they must have taken such joy in getting to know each other because, prior to the wedding, my parents did not have much contact with each other—their marriage was arranged according to the traditional Indian custom so they did not know each other's likes and dislikes. This photograph made me happy and sad. Happy that they got married, and sad because of what might have been had my father lived.

I always wondered what kind of person my father would have been, whether I would have looked exactly like him, and whether he would have taken me everywhere with him. My family always told me I am identical to my father, but this meant nothing to me because I did not know him personally, however, I realised it was true when I saw this photograph of him, which I got from an old family album (Figure 3.4).



Figure 3.4 Photograph of my father

When I looked at this photograph of my father, I could clearly see the resemblance between him and me. At one point in my life, I was desperate to know about my father and asked my mother numerous questions, for instance, what clothing he liked to wear, what his favourite food was—and

I wanted to eat the same type of food and wear similar clothing. My mother had a shirt that had belonged to my father and, when she was not at home, I would take out the shirt and try to imagine him in it. When I told my mother about this, she became very sad so I never did that again.

My childhood years, for me, seemed as if they never existed. As I sat and reflected upon this, I also became aware that I had very little recollection of those years. What I did remember were isolated incidents but important events like memories of my first day at school were nonexistent. It seemed as if, subconsciously, I mentally blocked out those memories. I believed this might be attributed to the fact that I did not have a very happy childhood. After my mother relocated to Pietermaritzburg, we had to live with my maternal grandfather and grandmother and two aunts who were unmarried at that time. Below is the photograph of the home we lived in (Figure 3.5).



Figure 3.5 My grandparents' home

When I took this photograph of my grandparents' old home on 24 July, 2015, it brought out a lot of mixed emotions in me. As can be seen, it is a small home in an Indian suburb and we had only two bedrooms, a lounge, kitchen, toilet and bathroom. My sister and I slept with my grandparents, and my mother and her two sisters slept together in the other bedroom. Although I bemoaned the loss of a traditional family home environment, living with extended family had certain advantages. There was always someone at home to receive us when we came from school, and meals were prepared

all day long. Our home was always full, not only with the family but with visitors who included relatives and friends. It was the hub or centre where everyone congregated because my grandmother had two married sons who lived on their own but visited very often with their families. Other relatives and friends were always welcome in the home, therefore, my sister and I were surrounded by people—but I always felt very alone. I always felt that I did not belong; children belonged to their parents, but we were lost children although my grandparents did the best they could. Below are photographs of my grandparents, which a relative gave me from an old family album (Figure 3.6).

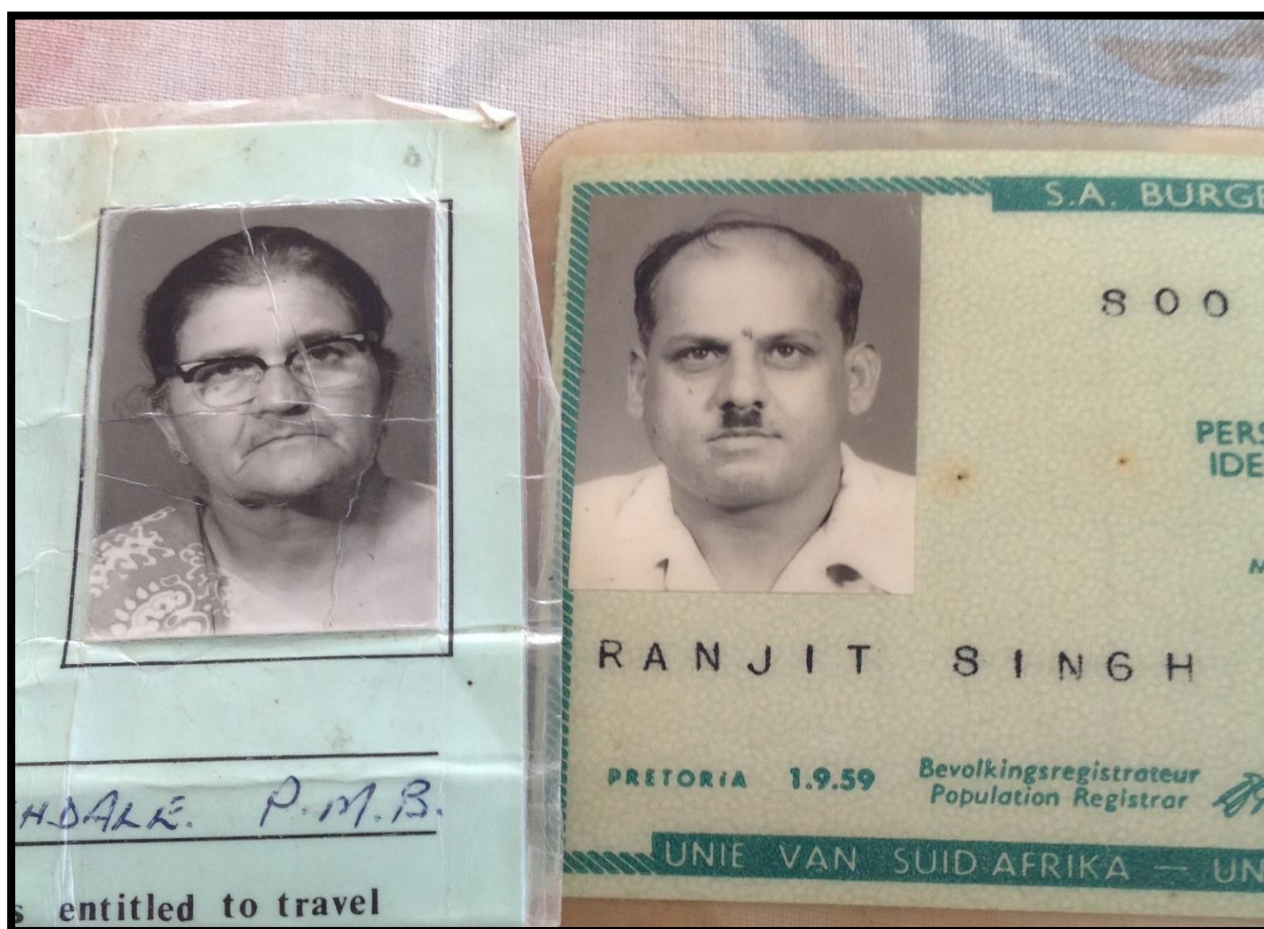


Figure 3.6 My grandparents

When I looked at these photographs I was transported to the little house we lived in, and memories of specific incidents came flooding to my memory. Despite the fact that my grandmother had never been to school at all and was totally illiterate, she was a wealth of knowledge both morally and spiritually. She lived to the age of 71, and her passing had a tremendous impact on our traditional

heritage. To me personally it was like a spiritual library burning down because she instilled such spiritual knowledge in me, which I still pass on to my children.

Although the house was fully electrified and we had electrical appliances, I clearly remember my grandmother had an old coal stove in the kitchen. This was a remnant from her days of living in a rural area that had no electricity. She absolutely refused to cook on the electric stove and the coal stove, be it summer or winter, was always lit because she was either cooking, making tea, or baking. I remembered waking up every morning to the smell of roti (traditional Indian bread) and the delicious smells of curry cooking. She believed in cooking fresh hot food every morning and used to wake up at 5 a.m. every morning to start up her coal stove. We always had a stack of wood at the back of the house, which my grandmother used to chop herself because she was a strong independent woman. I always admired her strength and her habit of being self-sufficient, which she passed on to her three daughters who included my mother. Her daughters, in turn, passed this on to their daughters. We, therefore, are a family of very strong, capable independent women.

There was no television at that time and I recall after supper we all cuddled around the coal stove, especially in winter, and listened to the radio or to stories that my grandmother told us from the *Bhagavath Gita*, *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, which are the holy books in the Hindu religion. My grandmother always told us stories with a religious significance or that had moral value. I remember her telling me to be proud of my religion of Hinduism because it is one of the oldest religions in the world. She told us stories about India and the significance of the Holy River Ganges yet she herself had never been to India. She always referred to India as our motherland and I dreamed of embracing my roots in India one day, standing on the land of my ancestors. I remember her telling us a story from the *Ramayana* about the significance of Deepavali, the Hindu festival of lights. She told us about Sita who was married to the Hindu demi-god, Lord Rama. Sita was an extremely brave woman and when Lord Rama was banished to the forest by his father's evil second wife, Sita insisted on accompanying him. She was later captured by the demon god, Ravana, and held hostage in his kingdom, Lanka, but despite this she never lost faith or hope. She went through many hardships against evil forces but her strength and bravery and resolve never weakened. Her husband eventually rescued her and the whole town of Ayodhya rejoiced by lighting up the city and burning fireworks. That is why the Hindus celebrate Deepavali.

My grandmother told us stories like this that were somehow related to female empowerment. She used to travel by bus to the city and do the entire month's shopping for the home, and travel back

by bus with all the parcels. On shopping days, my sister and I always got a little treat and, however small it was, it was well appreciated. One of my favourite stories was the one told by my grandmother about her aunt who wanted to drive a bus. Her parents and grandparents had owned buses and an aunt of hers learned to drive a bus whilst young. As she grew older, she would wait for the buses to leave the yard and then run to meet them away from the house. She used to bribe the bus drivers to let her drive the buses. Eventually, when her family found out, they allowed her to drive the bus for short distances under the supervision of a male family member. I simply loved that story and as a young child I used to fantasise about becoming a strong, grown woman with independent values and a disposition to match—just like my grandmother’s aunt.

That is why I believe I have this power of resilience and do not consider myself a victim. My daughter always tells me God gives his battles to his strongest soldiers and he never gives you more that you could handle. I do feel overwhelmed sometimes and lose faith in my ability to cope with certain heart-wrenching events that have taken place in my life but I believe I have this power and ability to bounce back. I credit this partly to the upbringing I had and the environment I was exposed to. All my grandmother’s stories gave me hope and faith, and built strength in me just as the novel, *The Secret Garden*, and the power of nature helped to build strength in the children Mary, Dickon, and Colin.

Mary used the forces of nature to not only build her physical strength but also her mental state of mind. So too, my escape into the fairy-tale world of the secret garden helped me stand against all the adversities I faced as a child. In one scene from the book, Mary is portrayed as a heroine—standing up and fighting with the wind, which seemed as if she was challenging nature to a duel to see who would be the victor (Burnett, 1969, p. 65). In the end, she won because she was healthier and stronger. I also challenged nature by exercising my mind and escaping into my make-belief world of the secret garden where I used to fight battles and emerge as the heroine—when I could have so easily let my circumstances drown me and then I would be the victim. But no, I was positive and fought back with my mind. No matter how weak and feeble a child I was physically, psychologically, I was a giant because I used my mental prowess to fight my battles.

Meanwhile, my mother, whilst caring for sick and aged people in their homes, realised that nursing was what she would like to do and she eventually got a position in a hospital where she worked almost all her life. However, times were tough and she worked during the day at the hospital, and

nights as a private nurse to make ends meet. Below is a picture of her in her work attire, which was taken in 2011 (Figure 3.7).



Figure 3.7 Photograph of my mother in her nurse's work attire

I looked at this photograph and it reminded me of how hard my mother worked all her life. At the age of 76, she is now a lively elderly woman who still has spunk and spirit. She still works to occupy herself, drives her own car, and manages all her affairs by herself. I have the utmost respect for my mother. She never had support from anyone but had to do everything by herself. When my mother eventually got her certificate as an enrolled nursing assistant, she was exceptionally proud of herself for having come this far. She learned to drive and purchased a cheap vehicle and, on her rare days

off, she would go around in her car selling clothing and bedding that she bought from a factory and sold on credit to people. She had to make all the decisions in her and our lives, alone—she had to feed us, educate us, and clothe us all by herself. She became a tough independent woman who never remarried and has now been a widow for 50 years. She has always been on the move and has no patience with anyone who takes their time getting things done. She is a remarkable woman who is strong, independent, energetic, progressive, and dependable. I, too, have inherited these characteristics and am loyal and dedicated to every position I am employed in. It is apparent that my mother role modelled all these characteristics and qualities for me.

When my mother got her certificate as an enrolled nurse, it was a momentous occasion for her. Below is a photograph of the certificate (Figure 3.8). I included this certificate because it is indicative of my mother's journey, which created a rather fervent impression on me. This photograph of her certificate, which she treasures, was also close to my heart because it allowed my mother to earn a decent salary. When she got her certificate, she could afford to give us a very good life. I could see a visible change in my mother. From being a housewife and housemaid, she progressed and her confidence improved tremendously. This made a great impact on me because I was witness to my mother's struggle and witness to her accomplishments. I am very proud to tell all my friends that my mother is a nurse and, personally, I am very encouraged by her resolve and determination. I yearned for a normal life with a stay-at-home mother until history repeated itself and I lost my husband and had children to take care of. Only then, did I really realise what my mother went through and how strong she has been. I have a whole new respect for my mother and get my strength from her.



Figure 3.8 My mother's certificate

3.4 It Was True, There Was No One Left but Herself³³

These words are spoken by Mary at the end of the first chapter in *The Secret Garden* when she discovers she is really and truly alone. It was a sobering thought for me as well when writing this personal history to come to terms with the fact that I had been really alone. Despite the fact that I was surrounded by people, my childhood was the most lonely time of my life. Mary's words echo

³³ "That was why the place was so quiet. It was true that there was no one in the bungalow but herself and the little rustling snake" (Burnett, 1969, p. 6).

my feelings, which resonated with her feelings when she realised she was all alone in the world. With those words, I bring this introductory chapter to my personal history narrative to a close.

In this chapter I narrated my lived experiences from birth through childhood. I spoke about the start of my unhappy childhood when my father died and my mother, sister, and I had to move to another town. I discussed the utter desolation and despair of having to live in my grandparents' crowded home but I also highlighted the happy experiences I had, listening to my grandmother's stories in the kitchen near the coal stove.

The poem that I began this chapter with spoke volumes of my desolation and despair regarding my personal circumstances. However, writing the chapter was very cathartic because I had never confronted the demons of my childhood previously. I consciously chose to detach emotionally, psychologically, and physically from that period. This was the first time I rigorously engaged with events that occurred during my childhood and this has helped me tremendously in coming to terms with my experiences. I came to the realisation that my childhood was not as bad as I had envisaged it. On the contrary, I believe that the struggles I endured were the lessons that moulded me into the strong, capable, and resilient woman I have grown to be.

In the next chapter, Chapter Four, I provide a narrative of my life experiences as a primary school learner and the humiliation I suffered after being called an "ugly duckling" by my grandfather. I also speak about the painful memories of being mistreated by my primary school teachers. I return to my favourite novel, *The Secret Garden*, and how I came across this book. I also show how I used the novel as an escape from my circumstances.

CHAPTER FOUR: ACROSS THE MOOR³⁴

*The bleak moor, she felt it might be the sea
But all hopes dashed
It sounds like the sea
The bleak moor, but no water
It is just an expanse of black ocean
Through which she was passing on a strip of dry land³⁵*

4.1 Dense Darkness³⁶

I gave this chapter the heading “Across the Moor” because it was symbolic of the journey my mother took back to her maternal home. I extracted words from the text of a chapter with the same title in *The Secret Garden*, and developed those words and phrases into a poem to commence this chapter in order to represent our journey to an unfamiliar home. Despite the fact it was only an hour away, in discussions with my mother, she revealed that the journey had been long and tiresome. Although my mother was going back home, her journey resembled that of Mary who found herself disorientated and confused taking a long journey across the bleak and barren moor—unsure of what to expect at her destination. My mother was in the same state of mind because she had my baby sister who was crying hysterically, and me asking questions about where we were going and what had happened to my father. My mother told me the heart-wrenching-story of how her breast milk had dried with the shock of my father’s death. She had to feed my sister condensed milk out of a can with a teaspoon to sustain her. Mary had thought she was travelling on the ocean, but it was only dry and barren land—depictive of her situation. My mother also felt she was travelling on a piece of dry land over a black ocean.

I titled this section “Dense Darkness” because these words, which I extracted from *The Secret Garden*, were a fitting description of the start of my primary school experiences. It was a dense dark time from which I thought I would never recover. The humiliation and degradation I experienced seemed to smother me in a world of darkness, and when I think about those days, I feel as if I am

³⁴ “Across The Moor” (Burnett, 1969, p. 15).

³⁵ “It felt as if it might be the sea, if there were water on it, said Mary, it sounds like the sea just now. The bleak moor was a wide expanse of black ocean through which she was passing on a strip of dry land” (Burnett, 1969, p. 17).

³⁶ “She could see nothing in fact but a dense darkness on either side” (Burnett, 1969, 1969, p. 17).

being consumed by self-loathing and I cannot breathe. I am trying to claw my way out but the darkness is too dense.

Samaras (2011) made me aware that as a self-study researcher, it was important for me to have an in-depth understanding of how my professional practice and my personal history transect because this can have impact on the future knowledge I would be generating in trying to transform my practice. Hence, in the previous chapter I narrated my childhood experiences from the time I was born. I showed how my family had to relocate to another town when my father passed away and the many hardships my mother went through working as a housemaid to sustain me and my sister. I highlighted the bittersweet experiences of having to live with my maternal grandparents and the many stories told by my grandmother. I also mentioned my grandmother's strength and independence, which she role modelled for me.

In this chapter, I highlight my unhappy experiences as a primary school learner and the humiliation I suffered after being labelled an "ugly duckling" by my grandfather. In addition, I reveal the harsh treatment I received from a teacher at school and the many insults I got for not being able to sew properly. In this chapter, I also attempt to show how these experiences could have contributed to my development.

4.2 I Don't Like It³⁷

I chose these words "I Don't Like It" from the novel because I did not like my childhood. Just as Mary, in *The Secret Garden*, exclaimed when she first sighted the moor, so do I feel the same way when I think about my childhood. My childhood home was not a very academically conducive environment. No one in my family circle had any academic aspirations. As a result, we did not have much exposure to newspapers, books, or anything of literary merit. Despite this, from the time I learned to read, I had a yearning for the written text. I remember, as a very young child walking home from school, I would read all the advertisements on shop windows and the posters at bus stops. At home, I would read the writing on toiletry bottles and canned food. It was an indescribable hunger to read but my family did not understand this. Whenever my grandparents caught me reading something, they would say that I was strange and that something mentally was wrong with me. I used to wait at the gate for the postman to deliver pamphlets before my grandmother got them because she used them to wrap the vegetable peels when she cooked so she could dispose of them

³⁷ "I don't like it," she said to herself, I don't like it" (Burnett, 1969, p. 17).

neatly in the garbage bin. With this photograph of my primary school, which I took on 12 April, 2015 (Figure 4.1), I commence the story of my primary school experiences.



Figure 4.1 My primary school (1969–1975)

I attended this school from 1969 to 1981, all the way through its transition from a primary school to a high school in 1976. When I looked at this photograph of the school taken when it was a primary school, I was filled with the same kind of dread I felt then. Despite the fact that the windows and doors now have burglar-bars, which they did not have then, it felt more like a prison then. I was trapped inside those walls where my creativity in writing was stifled. I was forced to take subjects in a rigid curriculum that allowed no room at all for choice. Some teachers were hard masters—

cruel and unkind—corporal punishment was rife and their solution to any digression from what they wanted. I had no other feelings about primary school other than dread and humiliation, even after all these years, because the injustices I endured left an indelible mark on me. Whenever my feelings are hurt or I get upset by certain events that occur, I am automatically drawn back to the feelings I experienced whilst at primary school.

At school, for the reading lesson, we were given books from The Gay Way Series (Boyce, 1970) that started with *The Yellow Book* and progressed through *The Orange Book*, and *The Violet Book* (Figure 4.2), to the ultimate *The Red Book* (Figure 4.3).

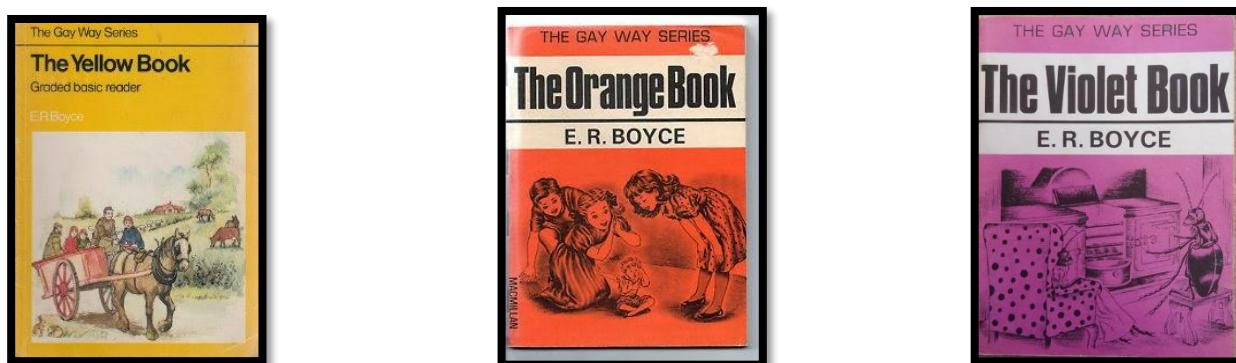


Figure 4.2 *The Yellow Book*, *The Orange Book* and *The Violet Book*

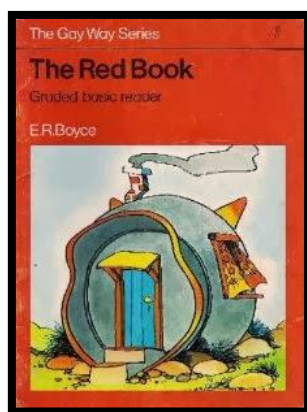


Figure 4.3 *The Red Book*

When you were able to read *The Red Book*, you had passed the reading test and could move to the next grade. I remember clearly sitting at the back of the class for reading so that I would get an opportunity to read the other learners' books whilst they were waiting to read to the teacher. The learners were at different stages in their reading so there were yellow, orange, violet and red books

in the class. I used to borrow the other books even if I had read them many times before and I would read them over again while waiting to read to the teacher. I was very disappointed and disillusioned because I knew I could read all the books but the teacher had her favourite learners whom she would allow to read to her and, by the time she got half way through the class, the time was up. The next day she would start again with her favourite learners and some of the really bright learners would never get a chance to read at all.

We were never given these books to take home because the teacher collected them at the end of the day. The school had a library but you could not take the books home and the library was not very well stocked. You could go during the breaks and read what was there but the library teacher wanted to have her lunch and the library was locked because she was in the staffroom. At that time, not much emphasis was placed on reading so no one really bothered to question her, not even the principal. I do not remember much about being in Class 1 (Grade 1) or my first day of school but I do remember receiving a book prize at the end of Class 2 (Grade 2) because I could read fluently. Over the years, the book got lost but below is a drawing (Figure 4.4) I made in April 2015 of a recent edition of the book (Kelly, 2014), which was called *The Ugly Duckling*, a popular children's storybook originally written by Hans Christian Anderson (1843).

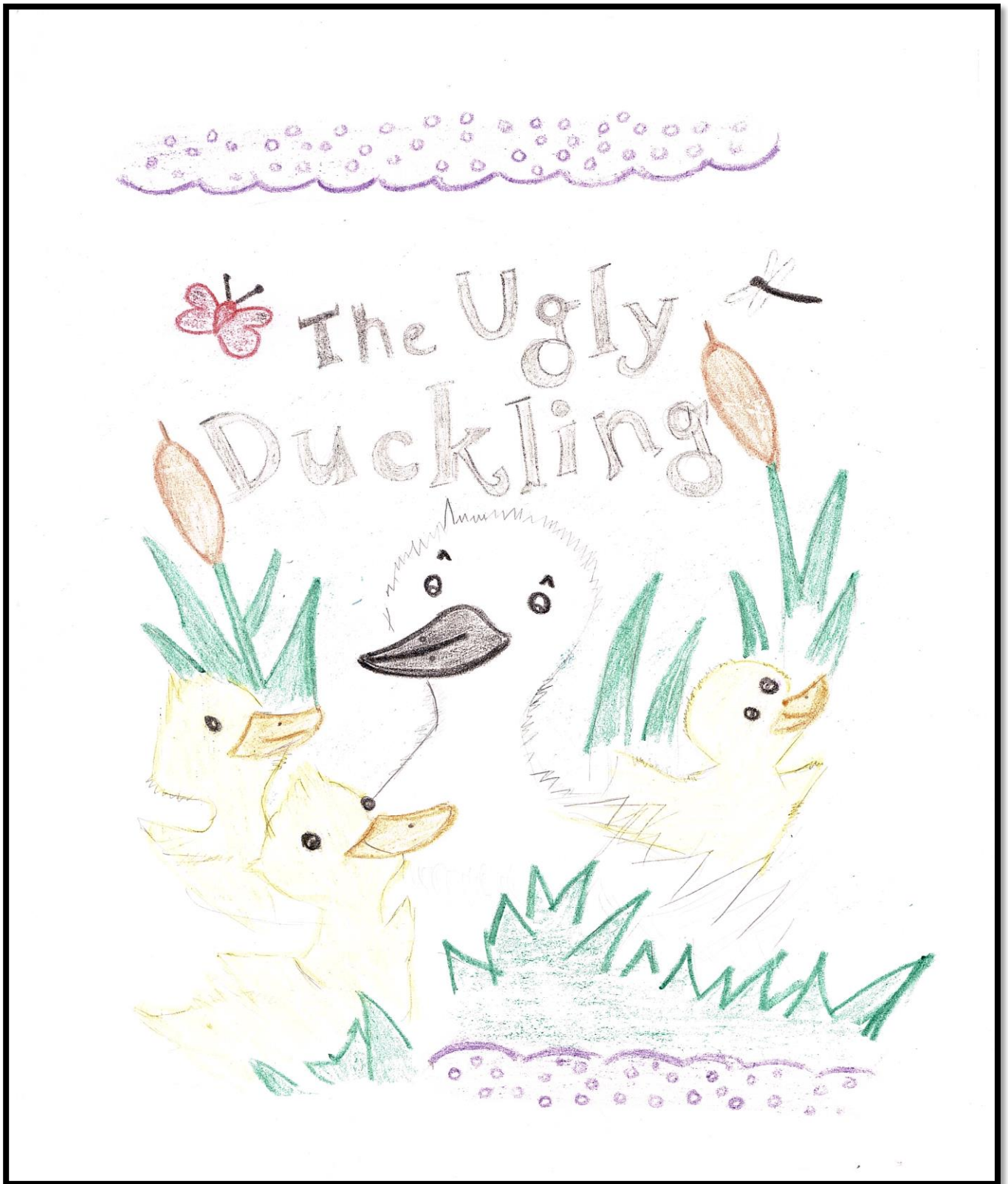


Figure 4.4 My drawing of the book, *The Ugly Duckling*

When I looked at this drawing of the book, I was taken back to the time when I started losing my self-confidence. At the time, I was too young to understand the deeper meaning that this story would

have for me because, to me, it was just a story. My life mirrored that of the ugly duckling because, indeed, I did turn from an ugly duckling into a swan. When I was at primary school, I saw myself as the ugly duckling that did not belong but, in high school and over the years with all my achievements both personally and professionally, I came to realise that the ugly duckling did indeed grow up to be a swan and find her true place with other swans. I believed that I had found my true place in the field of teacher education.

When I received this book as a prize, I was still too naïve and young to understand why I had received the prize, and I happily took it home and showed it to my grandfather. Hoping to be congratulated by him, my hopes were dashed when, for some reason, he told me that the school gave me a book because they felt sorry for me because I had come last in the class. I remember not saying anything to him because I believed him and, moreover, the book was called *The Ugly Duckling* and he had chuckled and said that I was like the ugly duckling. I hid the book away because he told everyone in the family, and it became a family joke to refer to me as Ugly Duckling. I would take the book out when no one was around and read the story—and I believed I was the ugly duckling, and grew up with this negative image of myself. I related this to Mary's initial experiences of a dreary, contrary, and miserable existence while living on the moor. It was initially an unfriendly home full of secrets and dark passages with the wind howling in the night. Similarly, I felt the same way about my primary school years. However, I always remembered the story that when the ugly duckling found out who he really was, he discovered that he was an elegant swan. I waited patiently for the day when I too would become a swan.

4.3 The Secret Garden

My sister, who entered school two years after me, got a prize at the end of her first year at school. She received a book called *The Secret Garden* by Francis Hodgson Burnett (1969). Below, is a photograph of the book, which I took in April 2015 (Figure 4.5).



Figure 4.5 My photograph of the novel, *The Secret Garden*

My book itself is torn and patched and simple looking, but it is actually strong and powerful in a gentle, kind, and nurturing way. The book nurtured me and has been my companion through all my hurts and difficult periods of my life, and still is in my possession as my companion.

This book was my sister's prized possession and she would not let it out of her sight. She carried it in her school bag to and from school and, at home, she would guard it. I would wait for her to go to sleep at night and sneak to her bag, take the book out, and read it quietly. It was a real struggle because we did not have a room of our own but shared a room with our grandparents who wanted to sleep by seven o'clock, so the lights had to go out at that time. I slept on a bunk bed above my sister and at night I would pull the curtains aside, and try and read with the little light that came in through the window. Sometimes I would forget to wake up before my sister and put her book back, and she would cry and perform and I would get a smack or two for taking her book.

Eventually she tired of the book and then I had it for myself. I cannot count the number of times I read this book over again. I would disappear for long periods of time in some corner of the garden or house and read the book. It was an escape for me from the harsh realities of my world. It was magical and like the main character, Mary Lennox, I used to disappear into the magical world of the

garden. In my secret garden, I took the role of whatever character I wanted to be. As I read, I made up my own stories in my head, and I had a very vivid imagination. I believe this book has carried me through my years. No matter how many books I read, I still read this book even though I have outgrown the storyline. It was as if the magic and make-belief story became my reality. Due to handling and being carried around for years, the book has become tattered—nevertheless, it is my prized possession, my confidante, and my greatest ally.

4.4 The Cry in the Corridor³⁸

I have called this piece of writing “The Cry in the Corridor” from *The Secret Garden* because it resembled experiences that I had. There was something strange and sinister about those events that always left me wondering if the manner in which I was treated was normal because they did not seem to happen to other children. Like Mary who heard strange cries in the night but could not get a straight answer from anyone about where it was coming from, so too it seemed that I was confused about my world. Although I could not overcome or avoid my negative experiences, I somehow used my imagination and found ways of working around the problems. I got through some tight situations but I survived them and the experience made me stronger. Just like Mary who plucked up the courage to find out who was crying and found her sickly bedridden cousin Colin—the source of the crying.

A memorable thought that stands out for me personally was my experience of being a Brownie, which is the female equivalent of being a Boy Scout. I vividly remember the brown uniform and beret I had to wear, and how proud I was when I had to walk in front of the whole school all smartly dressed in my attire with the shining Brownie badges pinned to my dress. This memory was most momentous for me because it was the first time in my life I was someone important. Tinged with this happiness was disappointment because my mother was working and could not attend my Brownie awards functions and my grandmother or aunt would attend instead. Whilst all the other parents were hugging their children and bragging about their achievements to one another, I was seen as a hindrance to my family who were forced to attend these functions because they felt sorry for me. As I recollected this memory, I was of the opinion that being seen as a hindrance during the best moments of my young life, has impacted my adult life. Throughout my life, both personally and professionally, whenever I received recognition for my successes like my graduation and my awards for academic achievement, I always played it down for fear of being a hindrance.

³⁸ “The cry in the corridor” (Burnett, 1969, p. 36).

I had recollections of an incident that took place at school, and which placed such fear into me that I would find every excuse not to go to school because I was convinced that the same fate would befall me too. The principal was an absolute terror on two feet. He smacked the learners black and blue, and he had a habit of pinching the tip of our noses. It was the most painful thing I ever endured and he would not hesitate to hit anyone. Even the parents were afraid of him because he would threaten to have their children expelled. All the children at school were required to wear the regulation uniform—shorts, shirts, and socks for boys, and skirts, shirts, and socks for girls, in summer and winter. You were allowed a blazer in winter but no warm leggings, jerseys, or scarves. One of the girls dared to wear leggings under her skirt and the principal saw this. In front of the entire school during the assembly, he made her stand on a chair and turn round and around. Her skirt ran up her legs because of the leggings and he humiliated her in front of the whole school. She cried for days but not even her parents could do anything about it.

My grandparents were convinced that in winter you were sure to get sick and they insisted I wore leggings with a jersey inside my shirt, with a blazer on top. After the incident in the assembly, I was petrified of being caught by the principal. But I was also scared of not obeying my grandparents so every morning before I got to school, I used to take a back path, remove my warm clothes and in the afternoon, put them back on before I went home. It was quite stressful and put added pressure on me when I was already having a difficult academic year. I almost failed that year but managed to move to the next grade. Sadly, when I was in Standard 3 (Grade 5), my grandfather passed away.

4.5 Trek Across the Moorland

I made this heading up from words in the novel, *The Secret Garden*, because it depicted Mary's trip across the moors the night she arrived. It was also representative of our moving to a new house. By the time my grandfather died, one of my aunts had married and moved to a bigger house of her own. My grandmother was now alone so my aunt and her husband offered that the rest of the family come and live with them. This is a photograph of our new house (Figure 4.6).



Figure 4.6 Photograph of the new house

Reflecting on this picture of the new house, which I took on 11 July 2016, I had mixed emotions. I was excited that we had moved into a house where my sister and I had our own room at last. It made me nostalgic because I missed the family togetherness and stories at the old coal stove. My grandmother had to sell all her old furniture because the new home was modern and my aunt and uncle were not having old stuff in their new home. There was no more listening to the radio either because television was now available. It all became so impersonal, with each one of us glued to the television screen and hushing each other because we wanted to hear the words clearly. I felt sad but as a child I soon got over it and our lives became governed by the television set.

I felt very grown up and took such joy in setting up my stuff in the cupboards. My uncle found a new job driving trucks and travelled all over the country so my aunt and granny were in charge of the home. It was a trying time for all of us because we had to pitch in together to make sure everything was running smoothly in the home. My grandmother stayed at home and cooked and cleaned as well as cared for my aunt's two children, who had just started school, while my aunt was expecting her third child. After school, we had to assist with caring for the children and doing small tasks around the house. We helped with the children's homework, and bathed and dressed them for bed. When my aunt came home from work, she was extremely exhausted and we had to be very careful to stay quiet and to keep her children from troubling her. This meant we had very little time for ourselves and our homework. My sister was younger than I, and the responsibility was left to

me to ensure that all the chores were done. My mother had taken a job out of town and lived with a family in Rosetta where she was a private nurse to an elderly woman. She very rarely came home because it was quite a distance away. Therefore, we were basically left to our own devices. I cannot ever remember a time when I was asked whether I had homework or an assignment; it was understood that I went to school and the school work and homework were my problem. If my report at the end of the term was not acceptable, then my mother was telephoned and she would arrive and scold me appropriately, never once asking if all was going well at school.

For me, all was not going well at school. I loved playing music and took up playing the recorder. This required me to practice the recorder constantly to improve myself. There was no opportunity for me to practise because, by then, my aunt had had her baby who slept in the afternoons so there had to be no noise. When the baby awoke, it was my responsibility to change the nappies and feed the baby a bottle. I would watch all the other children playing and I so much wanted to play on the street with the other neighbourhood children, but I had to lug the baby around on my hip. This is a photograph, which I took in June 2015, of the vacant field in front of the house where I yearned to play with the other neighbourhood children (Figure 4.7).



Figure 4.7 Photograph of the playground in front of the new house

Looking at this photograph made me realise how much of my childhood I really lost whilst babysitting. I had yearned as a young child to join my friends in the sand and grass, and to build sandcastles and camp in the open field. As an adult, I now have the freedom to do all that but,

obviously, it would never be the same as when I was young. I promised myself that I would allow my own children much freedom to be children and enjoy their childhood. My children are grown adults now, but we still talk about old times and watch videos of them when they were children. This photograph actually inspired me to watch the old videos and the joy and laughter on my children's faces as they frolicked in the sand and rolled on the grass brought me such peace. At least I gave my children that opportunity—I never restricted them. They used to come in at night with dirty faces, scraped knees, and filthy hands but I never complained because I wanted them to be children. Unlike me who never really had a childhood.

What stood out in my mind was that there were no disposable nappies and the baby wore a towelling nappy. I was but a child myself, but I had to change the soiled nappies. Sometimes I was too lazy to change the nappy and left the baby with a wet nappy and, because I was carrying the baby on my hip, the nappy gave me a rash on my hip and the baby got an even worse nappy rash. I got many a boxed ear and scolding for being so lazy but all I wanted to do was play like a regular child, not babysit. Here the bleakness of Mary's initial life on the moor was so like my life that it made me empathise with the anguish she must have been through. This episode in my life was something that I wanted to wipe out forever, but it remained in my memory as a constant reminder of my bleak existence as a young child. I felt the strangeness, loneliness, and absolute devastation Mary felt when she first saw the moor. By the time my aunt came home from work, I would be too exhausted to do my homework or practise playing my recorder. As a result, I was not performing well at school.

4.6 I Won't³⁹

In *The Secret Garden*, Mary says these words “I Won't” when she stands her ground against her cousin who is a selfish, spoilt, self-indulgent child used to getting people do anything he wants. However, she is strong and firm, and does not let his behaviour get her down or defeat her. In the end, she is the victor because her inner strength, which she is not aware of, bursts to the surface and gives her courage. Likewise, many humiliating and hurtful events took place during my primary school years but I did not let them get the better of me. An inner strength and power kept me detached from the hurt, and I constantly reminded myself that I was the ugly duckling and was just biding my time till I realised my potential—and then I would become an elegant, graceful swan.

³⁹ “‘I won't,’ said Mary” (Burnett, 1969, p. 136).

When I was in Standard 4 (Grade 6), I believed one of my teachers hated me with a passion. She would ask for my vocabulary book, which was always in such shambles that she would hold it with a ruler. We wrote with fountain pens then, which required you to dip the pen into a bottle of ink and then write. I would do my homework with the baby strapped to my hip or playing on the bed beside me and on many occasions, the ink spilled onto my book. It was a real mess with ink splashes all over and the writing absolutely atrocious. She would hold my book up with a ruler and show it to the rest of the class—on many occasions she called me a “dirty pig.” I would hide my head inside my desk with embarrassment, and cringe and hope she would stop, but she took some perverse pleasure in picking on me. Not once did she ask me why the book was in that state. She just assumed I was a filthy child. By then, she was detaining me every afternoon, making me sit in her class and write vocabulary. When I got home, it would be very late, my chores piling up, the baby crying, the other children in need of bathing, my grandmother grumpy—and me in big trouble. To avoid this, I would escape detention before the teacher spotted me, and face her punishment the next day. Corporal punishment was the main method of punishment then and she would make me kneel on the floor in front of the class with my fingers on my ears.

Sometimes, teachers made learners kneel on coarse salt on the floor in order to punish them. When they got up from the floor their knees would be bruised and sore. It was the most humiliating time of my life because the other kids laughed and teased me. It became so stressful that I developed a stammer and a nervous twitch—I would twitch my nose every few minutes—an action that I had no control over. Reading aloud in class was so traumatic that on days we had reading, I would make some excuse not to go to school. As a result, my favourite subjects, English and Afrikaans, became a dread for me.

Whilst writing these stories, I reflected on what impact we as teachers actually do have on our learners and students. We can either make the students or break the students’ spirit entirely. It placed a burden on me and, I suppose, other teachers, to comprehend how powerful our role modelling and influence really is. The other children used to call me for no reason—pretend to talk to me—just to see my nose twitch, and then burst into laughter. It was, indeed, a very traumatic period in my life, and in the lives of many other learners who were victims of such harsh measures of discipline. These thoughts continued to plague me—the humiliation and disregard for dignity and human rights. As a schoolteacher, whenever I was tempted to lash out at a learner, these thoughts would always come into my mind like a silent warning. On numerous occasions, my memories and triggers of emotions from past history cautioned me, just in time, to not put my learners through those experiences. When

I reflected on this now, as much as my primary school experience haunted me, it served as a deterrent for me not to make the same mistakes my teachers made.

One day that same teacher gave me a letter requesting my mother to come to school. I put the letter into my bag with dread because she had told me what was in the letter. On the way home, I plotted what I could do with the letter, and even thought about tearing it up, throwing it away, and saying that my mother could not come. Nevertheless, I took it home and handed it to my aunt who read the letter and phoned my mother. My mother was extremely worried and said she would come the next day. I did not sleep that night and worried all night what the teacher was going to say about me.

Next morning, I hoped the weather would be stormy and that maybe my mother might not come but, to my misfortune, it dawned bright and sunny. I could not even eat breakfast, and felt like vomiting as I left the house. When I got to school, my friends and I spoke in hushed tones about what we thought my mother would do to me. I felt like running away from school, I could not concentrate on the lessons and kept looking out the window, thinking she would appear at any time. I even got boxed on the ear by another teacher when she caught me staring out the window. A little after ten, I began to relax slightly thinking my mother would not come but then my worst fear had come true. From the corner of my eye, I saw the black cape that nurses wore over the white uniform, and the brown shoes. I was so scared I did not even lift my head, but acted as if I was concentrating on my work. I heard the knock on the door and the blood was pounding in my ears. My breath caught in my throat and I waited to hear my name being called. But then I could hear laughter and happy voices and my friend seated next to me nudged me to look up. Was I surprised? My mother was actually hugging my teacher and they were smiling and laughing with each other—the very same teacher who made my life a living hell, called me a filthy pig, and made me kneel on the floor was laughing with my mother.

I could not believe it. Apparently, they knew each other very well and they were so busy catching up with stories that they forgot all about me. I was ecstatic and believed I was safe, and then my mother mentioned the letter and my dread began again. The teacher took my soiled vocabulary book from the cupboard and showed it to my mother. My mother was disgusted and called me to the door. She asked me about the book, I mumbled something incoherent, and they began discussing me. The teacher told my mother how I avoided detention and ran away in the afternoons, but she did not tell her she called me a filthy pig nor did she tell my mother she made me kneel on the floor. The teacher agreed to give me a new vocabulary book but I had to rewrite all the words during the lunch break.

I was quite happy doing this because my book was now neat and tidy, and I liked writing. This experience made me aware of not judging my learners without sufficient information about their circumstances. I always made it a point of enquiring first about the learners' and students' circumstances before I made rash decisions. This made me very endearing to the learners at school and, more especially, to my students at university—they see me as a mother figure because I show them I care. They have the utmost respect for me because of my empathetic attitude; this impacted positively on my teaching experiences but, on the other hand, it worked in my disfavour. Students are very reluctant to hurt my feelings and are loyal to a fault; it was very difficult to get a truly objective perspective from them about my teaching. That was when I decided to use metaphors as a medium through which they could express their views about my teaching.

My other nightmare at school was needlework. I cannot do needlework at all—I cannot cut straight or sew straight. We were required to cut out a pattern, stitch it, and add frilly lace on the edge to make knickers. My knickers looked nothing like knickers at all with their mismatched thigh sizes and crooked lace. I could not hold scissors straight. I was belittled because I could not sew and, at the end of the year when all the other girls put their garments on display for parents to come and admire the finished products, I did not mention it at home and told the teacher that my mother worked far away and could not come. She said that was well and good and kept my garment hidden in a cupboard whilst the parents were there. At the end of the year, she gave it to me and said it was only good for wiping the floors—I took it home and hid it in my cupboard.

However, on discussion with a few colleagues I managed to locate who went to primary school with me, I realised that they did not think I was that bad. I felt like a complete idiot with my messed up vocabulary book and my crooked knickers. My friends commented on how well I played the recorder despite my lack of practice and, especially, they spoke about how I excelled at languages. One friend could not stop talking about my ability to be able to write the best compositions and stories both in English and in Afrikaans. She said it always amazed her how I could just start writing instantly and, in a few minutes, write a whole page while they were still coming to grips with the topic. We laughed about the teacher who constantly scolded me for writing too much because she would then have too much to read and mark. Indeed, I did not realise it at the time but the teachers and the school itself were slowly stifling and killing my creativity. I was always careful to write only the required length for fear of being scolded but in reality, my hands itched and my brain tingled in wanting to write lengths. I felt as if I could write and never stop. As my time in primary school slowly came to an end, I looked forward to my last year, Standard 5 (Grade 7). At least, after that, I

would no longer have the hateful teacher who made me feel terrible about myself like I was nothing and nobody.

Nothing significant occurred during that year except my hopes of leaving the school were dashed—we were informed that it was the last year the school would be a primary school and from the next year, the school was becoming a high school. I was devastated because I wanted a change, a new beginning in a new school where I could leave behind all the hurtful memories of having to kneel on the floor and be humiliated. I was to remain in the same school for my high school career. My academic progress improved slightly in Standard 5, with me excelling in English and Afrikaans. I was allowed to participate in the Afrikaans Olympiads and I achieved good results and obtained certificates of merit. This boosted my very low self-esteem and improved my confidence tremendously—so much so that by the end of my primary school life, I began looking forward to high school despite the fact that I had to remain in the same school. As the end drew close so, too, I mentally shut the doors on my primary school life. Throughout my life, I seldom spoke about my primary school experience. I heard other people chatting away happily about incidents from primary school but I was always silent in this regard. This thesis was the first time that I had to think about that phase of my life.

Not only did it open up old wounds and hurts, but it helped me to see my primary school life from an adult's perspective. As an educator in a combined school prior to becoming a teacher educator, I had to teach primary school learners subjects like needlework. I remember making the lesson as exciting as possible, and allowing learners to do what they were happy and comfortable with. Those who did not like sewing, I let them knit or crochet, and those learners who could not do any of that, I allowed them to cut pictures out of magazines to make scrapbooks of pretty clothing. I never forced a learner or embarrassed a learner. I would plan fun activities for them because I had dreaded needlework. I got into lots of trouble because needlework was a compulsory component of the curriculum but I had learners making popcorn and candy apples instead of doing needlework. Whilst writing this personal history about my primary school, I came to realise what an impact some of my experiences had on my development and my role as an educator. I never wanted to put the learners through the same torture I had gone through.

I transformed myself from a bitter, angry, and resentful child to a mature forgiving adult. Neu (2011, p. 134, as cited in Adams, 2017) described forgiveness as a “change of heart, a shift in attitude, an alteration of an inner state.” Hagberg (2011, as cited in Adams, 2017) claimed that forgiveness

occurs when the harmed person is able to get over the anger and bitter thoughts towards those who inflicted harm upon her. When this happens, then the incident no longer remains the focal point of the person's existence. Although the incident is not forgotten, the injured person develops a changed perspective of the situation, the people, and the events that harmed her. By making herself believe that the persons who injured her were only acting as best as they could, the injured person is able to change the dynamics of the incident. Adams (2017) advised that forgiveness is not applicable to only one incident, but should be an ongoing occurrence and should be a reminder to the injured person that she should not inflict the same damage upon others. Hence, in my practice as a teacher and teacher educator, I am always mindful never to make the same mistakes that my teachers made with me at school.

4.7 She Had Never Felt so Contrary in all Her Life⁴⁰

When Mary arrives at Misselthwaite Manor in the middle of the night and is shown to her room, she has an odd feeling. This odd feeling makes her feel as contrary to her life as she has ever felt. I also felt contrary to my life at the end of my primary school experience. I felt that it was someone else having those horrible episodes and I was an onlooker having an out-of-body experience. The heading I gave to this chapter describes these contrary feelings most appropriately.

In this chapter, I related the dark dismal experiences of my primary school years. I mirrored my experiences to the initial desolate and dismal days of Mary Lennox in *The Secret Garden* when she saw the moor for the first time. She thinks it is the ocean but it is just a wide expanse of land. She believed, at first, the land was barren and unfriendly but, as she listens to Martha, the young servant girl who is Dickon's sister, she comes to realise there is much life on the moor. She later grows to love the moor as nature in the secret garden heightens her senses and awareness of natural things. So, too, my primary school years, as an introduction to my schooling experiences, were darkened by some incidents that occurred. Nevertheless, like Mary, I realised that all my teachers were not going to be like my primary school teachers. On entering high school, my true potential began to emerge and this filled me with confidence and inner power.

In the next chapter, I relate the dramatic turn my life took when my new English teacher encouraged me and supported me—giving me back my dignity. I show how he allowed me to write and act out my own plays, and how he turned history lessons into drama lessons by allowing the class to act out

⁴⁰ "It was in this way Mistress Mary arrived at Misselthwaite Manor, and she had perhaps never felt quite so contrary in all her life" (Burnett, 1969, p. 19).

the parts. I became strong, confident, and motivated to learn and my high school experience was a far cry from my primary school experience.

CHAPTER FIVE: IT HAS COME⁴¹

*The rain storm had ended
The grey mist and clouds swept away
The wind itself had ceased, a brilliant deep blue sky
Arched high over the moorland⁴²*

5.1 Springtime's on its way⁴³

I chose the heading "It Has Come" from a chapter in *The Secret Garden*. I also selected text from the novel and used it as a poem to commence this chapter because it signified the change in Mary's life. Her spring had come and, similarly, my high school experience was the start of my springtime when I began to shake off my negative self-image and found my true worth. My grey clouds had shifted and bright blue sunny skies shone down from the heavens on me.

Samaras (2011) drew my attention to the fact that when self-study researchers like myself intertwine our explorations of our teaching practices with our personal life experiences, this can act as a channel to harness the impact that our personal lived experiences could have had on our development. Therefore, in the previous chapter, I provided details of my unhappy primary school experiences. I showed how I developed a negative self-image when my grandfather labelled me an ugly duckling and told me I received a book prize for coming last in the class instead of first. I then discussed my various primary school experiences, namely, being humiliated by a teacher and made to kneel on the floor and being called a dirty pig. I spoke about how I hated the subject needlework because I could not sew and how the teacher embarrassed me because of this. I narrated how I lost all my dignity and was mortally afraid of the school principal.

In this chapter, I recount how my life took a complete turn. I found my true worth as a high school learner because of the kindness and warm attitude of my English teacher who saw my potential and my love for the languages. He encouraged me to participate in the national language examinations, for which I received certificates. So motivated was I, that I participated in a sporting event at school and even received a certificate. Whilst my high school years began very pleasantly, they did not end

⁴¹ "It Has Come" (Burnett, 1969, p. 157).

⁴² "The rain storm had ended, the grey mist and clouds swept away, the wind itself had ceased, a brilliant deep blue sky, arched high over the moorland" (Burnett, 1969, p. 50).

⁴³ "Springtime's on its way" (Burnett, 1969, p. 50).

well because of insistence by my mother to change my direction of study. I wanted to study music but my mother wanted me to become a nurse—I was very unhappy, so much so that I lost interest in school and did not gain a university entrance pass. I had to repeat my matric year but then I achieved good results.

My primary school was converted into a high school in 1976 and I commenced Standard 6 (Grade 8) in that year and remained in that school until my matric year in 1981. When thinking and writing about my high school years, I still get butterflies in my stomach as I had on the first day of high school as I waited in my old classroom. I was exceptionally excited, not only because I was now in high school but all traces of the primary school were slowly disappearing. Construction had been going on throughout the previous year and on the first day of school, the new classrooms with new furniture and shiny floors were such a welcome sight. The bathrooms designed for little children had been removed and in their place were gleaming new taps and toilets for high school learners. Even the gardens had been replanted and the childish pictures on the walls in the corridors had been replaced with chrome and glass notice boards. There were no windows facing the corridors where teachers and the principal could look into the classrooms. I remembered feeling very safe somehow in this new environment. Below is a photograph of my high school as it looked when I took the photograph in July 2016 (Figure 5.1).



Figure 5.1 My high school (1976–1981)

The best part was that all the old primary school teachers, including the principal, were no longer there. There were lots of new learners from other schools and, although it was the same school, to me it felt like a new school. During the course of the day, we were put into classrooms with other learners and I was ecstatic to notice that there were mostly new kids and only a few learners from my previous class. I was very reserved and shy from my horrendous experiences in primary school; I was not too forthcoming in making friends easily. In fact, I remember that I was just content sitting in my new classroom with my new desk and new teacher and with a sense of absolute peace. I felt that I was going to have my new beginning after all. This was soon realised when my new teacher introduced himself. It was strange for me because I had never had a male teacher before. Surprisingly, I was not afraid because he was a gentle, kind, and caring person. I had the good fortune of being taught by this teacher in high school and later working with him as a colleague when he became an educational psychologist at the institution where I am employed. This teacher gave me back my life and demonstrated to me, in his teaching and by his disposition, what humanistic values and principles are.

Apart from being the registration teacher of my class, he taught English, my favourite subject. For the first time we had to learn literature in English by reading short stories, novels, and plays. I was in my element especially when we read the plays and poems. My teacher assigned roles to different learners in the class and I remember having great fun reading the different parts. My teacher was a soft-spoken person but when he read poetry or Shakespeare, he came alive. He read with such enthusiasm and zest, he was like a completely different person. I identified with him totally, because I also came alive when I read poetry and Shakespeare. This teacher gave me the freedom to learn, to experiment, and discover myself. He gave us opportunities to write our own short sketches and plays and, during the English literature lesson, we had opportunity to act out our plays and sketches. Irrespective of how poorly the play was written or acted, he had nothing but praise, encouragement, and good words for the class.

During that year, he gave the class a challenge to choose a play from our prescribed book that he would allow us to perform for the rest of the school. The play was called *The Monkey's Paw* written by W. W. Jacobs (1902) and I got the lead role of a character named Bertha. I remember spending hours rehearsing my parts. It became the most exciting event of the year as we planned our costumes and put on makeup and practised after school. My friends and I used to arrive at school at 6:30 in the morning just to rehearse. I had never been so excited to go to school in my life, which had such a positive impact not only on my English marks but on my overall academic performance. I used to enthusiastically complete my homework, knowing I would be rehearsing later. The day of the play finally arrived and my friends and I got to school early in the morning. I had not been able to sleep that night and kept on waking up and trying on my costume. When we performed the play, it was such a success that we were asked to perform it for a whole week for all the grades. It earned me the nickname Bertha thereafter, but that did not matter. For the first time in my life I felt confident and noticed. I was no longer a “filthy pig” but someone who was admired. Although I was being teased with a nickname, it did not matter because I was being noticed. I realise, now, that I was so desperate for some recognition and attention that even being teased was not a problem. Standard 6 year was the year I came into being and became aware of my potential and capabilities.

I became outspoken in a good way because I had been afraid of answering questions in class for fear of ridicule. I was not aware of it, but my nervous twitch disappeared as I answered questions and participated in class. Even if my answers were incorrect, I was not afraid of failure—I would go ahead and answer. I even shocked myself with my change in attitude and manner but despite all this confidence, I never became arrogant. I was always humble because in the deep recesses of my mind

there lurked that fear that I was not good enough. It never surfaced but remained dormant, nevertheless, it was there. My Standard 7 (Grade 9) year passed quite uneventfully.

5.2 It Is all Different Already⁴⁴

The happiness and enjoyment that I experienced at the start of my high school years disappeared, and I used those words to title this section because everything did change for me. At the end of Standard 7, as is the practice even today, we had to choose a course of specialisation towards the exit examinations, which was the matriculation examination. Unfortunately, the school I attended did not offer music up to Standard 10 (Grade 12) and I was required to attend a school that specialised in music because I so desperately wanted to study music. I made the arrangements with my teachers to be transferred to the other school but did not tell my mother and my family. Just before the start of the next academic year, I panicked because I needed a new uniform for the new school as well as some musical instruments. I explained to my mother what I had done, and she was livid. She insisted that, because she was a nurse, I also had to become a nurse. The family joked that I was going to play music for the patients to make them better. Once again I was the object of ridicule and my self-confidence took a beating again. My mother, without considering my feelings or my desire to study music, reversed my transfer and I had to remain in my school. By doing this without consulting me, she did not realise that not only did she destroy my ardent desire to study music but she deprived another learner of the same opportunity of studying music. Being selected to study music was then an absolute privilege, and only a few were chosen based on performance in the music examinations. That year, only three learners, including me, were chosen. Another learner who had one mark less than me in the examinations desperately wanted to study music. But because I had originally said I was going to transfer to the music school and then declined, they took a learner from another school to replace me. As a result, the girl who got one mark less than me did not get an opportunity to study music.

5.3 Joy⁴⁵

I titled this section with these words because an exciting event took place that year and took my mind off my disappointment in not being able to study music. My mother got a new position nursing an elderly woman in Howick, a quiet scenic town just outside Pietermaritzburg. The best part of this was that she got permission to bring us to the house every weekend and during school holidays. We were very excited because the woman had a huge old house filled with old treasures and what I liked

⁴⁴ “‘It is all different already,’ she said” (Burnett, 1969, p. 128).

⁴⁵ “There was every joy on earth in the secret garden that morning” (Burnett, 1969, p. 130).

best was that she had a library filled with books. In the library, was a window seat that looked out into vast gardens with an orchard and a river at the end of the garden. She also had an old portable typewriter that she said I could use, and I spent many an hour locked in the library reading the books or banging away at the typewriter. The woman was very lonely, quite learned, and had come over from India to marry in South Africa. Many an evening was spent with my sister and I sitting at her feet in front of the fire listening to her tales about her life in India and her trips on ships across the world. We would sit with rapt attention and hang onto her every word. During the day, we would take her in her wheelchair into the gardens and orchard and she allowed us to break apples and plums off the fruit trees. It was an idyllic time in our lives—gone were the days of babysitting and cleaning soiled nappies. Sadly, she passed away and my mother had to leave the position. But, during this time, we explained to my mother that it was very difficult living with family and that she had to get a position where she could get us our own home and come home every day. Luckily, she got her old position back at the hospital and, for the first time in our lives, we managed to get our own house.

We were in our element when my mother took us shopping to purchase our new furniture and allowed us to wallpaper our room with our choice of wallpaper. My sister and I chose beautiful curtains and bedding for our room, and the day finally arrived when we moved into our sweet little home. It was like a little fairy-tale house with pretty feminine colours and smart furniture. What made it more enjoyable was the fact that we had a part in everything and cared for our house. When family came to visit, we would proudly show off our accomplishments and when admiring comments were made, we were in our element. It was so warm and inviting to sit every evening, just the three of us, and have a meal together or watch television. At last, we felt like a family. In Standard 8 (Grade 10) I excelled in English and in Afrikaans. I wrote the Afrikaans national language examination and received a certificate. A photograph of the certificate is below (Figure 5.2).



Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie

Afrikaanse Taaleksamen

Eksamenkommissie van die
SAAMWERK-UNIT VAN NATAL

Voorbereidende Eksamen, 1978

Hiermee word gesertifiseer dat

ANITA HARRIEPERD

in die Gewone Graad geslaag het.

Philip R. J. Nel
Voorsitter Eks. Kom.

J. H. Brander
Sekreter Eks. Kom.

(Minimum vir Hoër Graad (met 1 of): 75 persent.)
(Minimum vir Hoër Graad: 60 persent.)
(Minimum vir Gewone Graad: 40 persent.)

Figure 5.2 My Afrikaans Voorbereidende Examination Certificate (1978)

I realised that I was a very good Afrikaans student, even better than in English. I did not study Afrikaans because it came naturally to me. The other learners in my class admired my ability to write in Afrikaans, which posed a problem to many learners because Afrikaans was not their first language and if you failed Afrikaans you failed the entire year's examinations. My self-confidence slowly improved and I began taking part in school plays and represented my school on the debating

team in English and Afrikaans. Whilst in Standard 9 (Grade 11) I also wrote the Afrikaans national language examinations and received the certificate below (Figure 5.3).

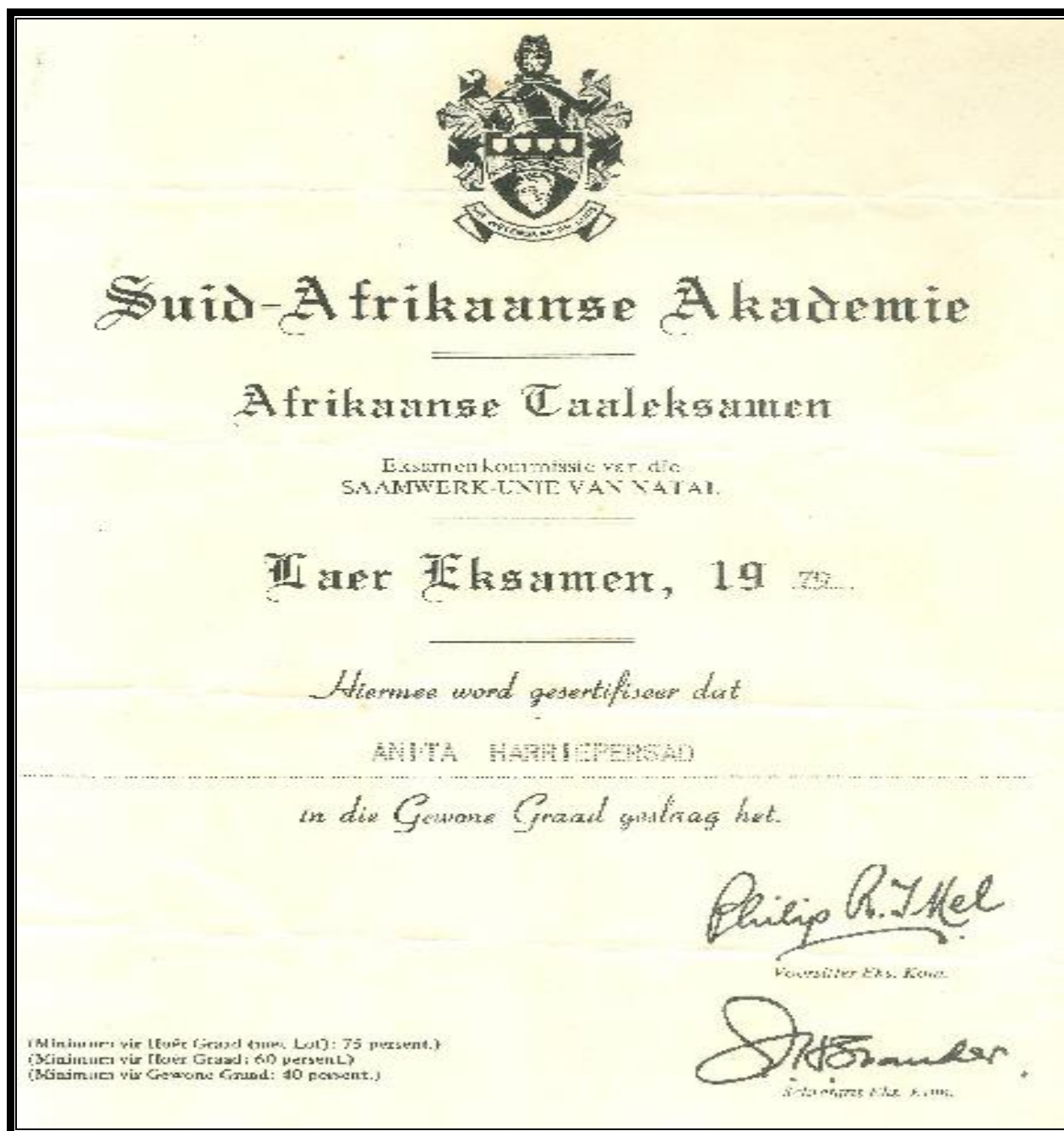


Figure 5.3 My Afrikaans Laer Examination Certificate

When I look at these certificates, I experience such a sense of accomplishment because it was my effort and strength that got me these certificates. A new chapter in my life was opening and I realised all good things were happening to me. This really gave me confidence and, from being a shy nose-twitching, insecure girl, I progressed into a confident and strong young woman. I was so proud of myself that I wanted to try everything. I am not much of a sports person but because my confidence

had improved so much, I decided to participate in a road race held by the school. Below is the certificate I received for completing the race (Figure 5.4).

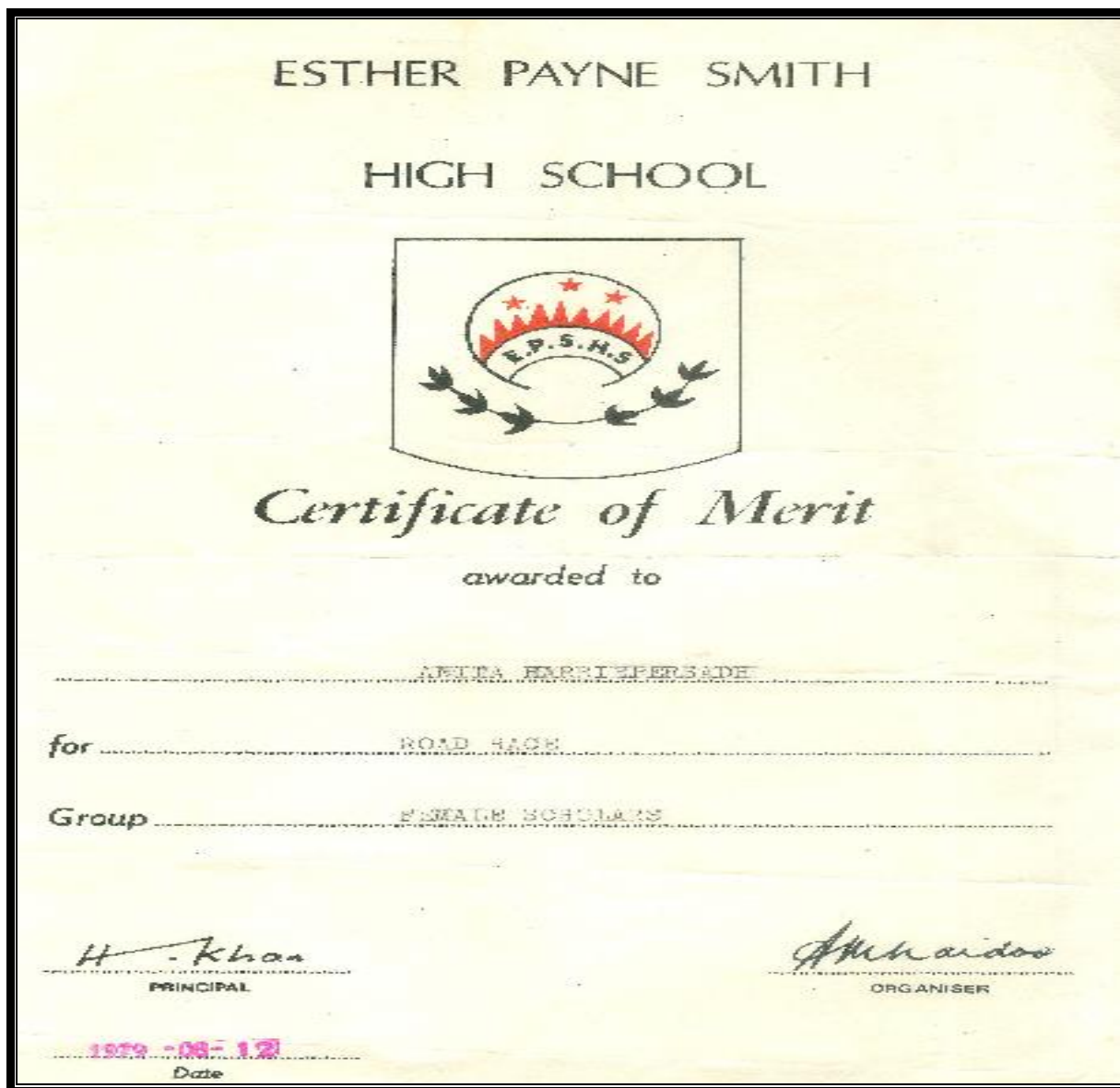


Figure 5.4 Certificate for road race

When I looked at this certificate, I realised that 1979 had been my year. I was sure of myself and also confident in my abilities. I cannot believe that I participated in a sporting event because sport and me do not agree. I would rather take a book and hide in some corner than take part in any form of sport whatsoever. It was very rewarding that I had emerged from my sheltered world of books and fairy-tale dreams and managed to do something completely out of character. This led me back to my personal learning from this study. Just as I took part in that race, so I also attempted an arts-based research approach for my study—and found that only after I attempted something I had never

tried before, did I realise I was capable of anything if I put my mind to it. However, 1979 did not end as well as it started.

During 1979 and early 1980, the non-white school learners in South Africa began boycotts against the learning of Afrikaans and, despite the fact that I was all for learning Afrikaans, I joined my fellow classmates in solidarity. It was a time filled with turmoil, and police and army presence was a normal occurrence at the school. I remember the police shooting at school learners with rubber bullets and hitting us with batons on our legs and bottoms. This really angered some learners and they began throwing stones and rotten vegetable at the teachers. Soon the police Special Branch were visiting our homes. It was a scary but also exciting time, and I recall singing freedom songs and chanting antiracist slogans. I was caught up in the struggle and became a rebel.

By the time the boycotts settled, I had lost interest in school—partly because the subjects I was studying held no interest for me apart from the languages and also because the thought of becoming a nurse horrified me. I attempted my matriculation examinations in 1981, totally unprepared. Even more disastrous that year, the papers were leaked and had to be rewritten. There was mass failure that year and I got a conditional exemption, which meant I had to rewrite a few subjects to get a university admission pass. When that happened, I convinced my mother that I did not want to become a nurse. She agreed on condition I do something in the medical field and I chose radiography. When I saw fellow classmates who passed their examinations getting excited about going to work or attend university, I felt left out. I made a decision that I did not want to rewrite my subjects but that I wanted to repeat the whole year so that I could get better marks. I asked my mother to change my school because I needed a change—I had been in the same school forever. She agreed and I went to a new school. This is a photograph of my new school, which I took in June 2015 (Figure 5.5).



Figure 5.5 My new high school (1982)

I was a completely different person in the new school. I behaved in the proper manner and dressed appropriately in the correct uniform as is evident in the photograph below (Figure 5.6). This new school was like a new beginning for me. I realised that I had made a real mess of my life up to that point and was determined to start all over again. I was thankful that my mother agreed to change my schools because it gave me a chance to reinvent myself. The children at the new school did not know me so they had no recollection of my stammering or twitching nose, they did not know I could not sew, and they did not know about my dirty vocabulary book. I excelled academically, and I was well liked by the learners and the teachers. I was beginning to feel good about myself again.



Figure 5.6 Me in my new school uniform (1982)

When I looked at myself in this photograph, I realised that I had made a lot of mistakes but that I had the courage and determination to remedy those mistakes. I took the plunge and went back to school when most of my friends were already working or studying. Had I not gone back to school, I am convinced that I would not have amounted to anything in this lifetime. Going back to school was the impetus I needed to push me out into the world. My advantage was that I knew most of the work and after the assessments in the first term, I was excelling in all subjects. I became a star in my new class and the language teachers were thrilled with me—especially the Afrikaans teacher. This time I was determined to pass with excellent marks and I worked consistently throughout the year and achieved those excellent marks. In addition, I received an award from the school for outstanding achievement in Afrikaans. Below is the photograph of the prize (Figure 5.7) and the certificate (Figure 5.8) I received. My mother was beside herself with happiness.

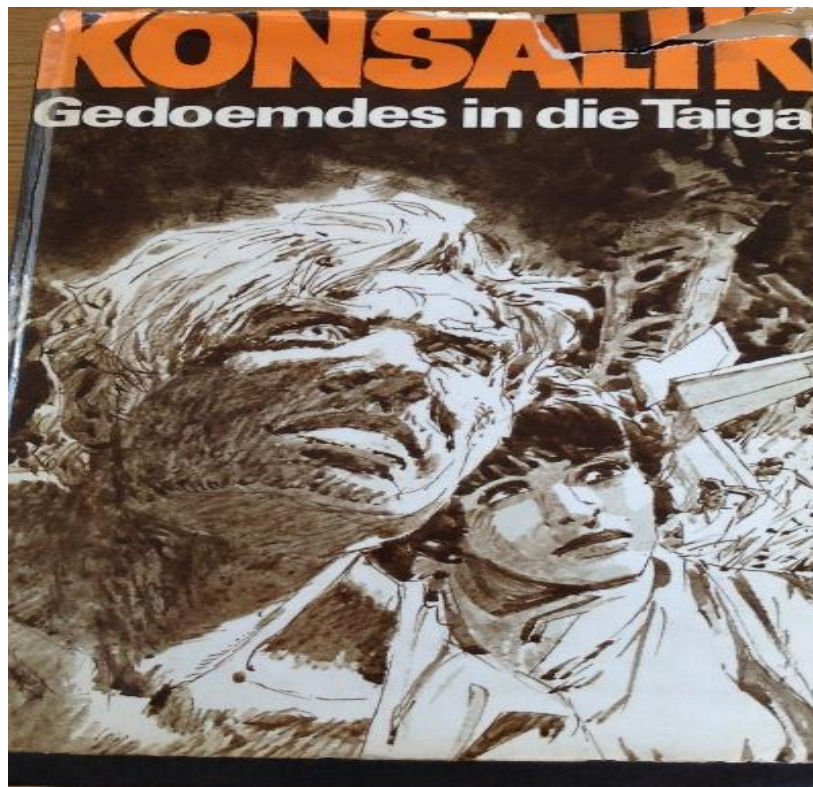


Figure 5.7 The book award I received for Afrikaans

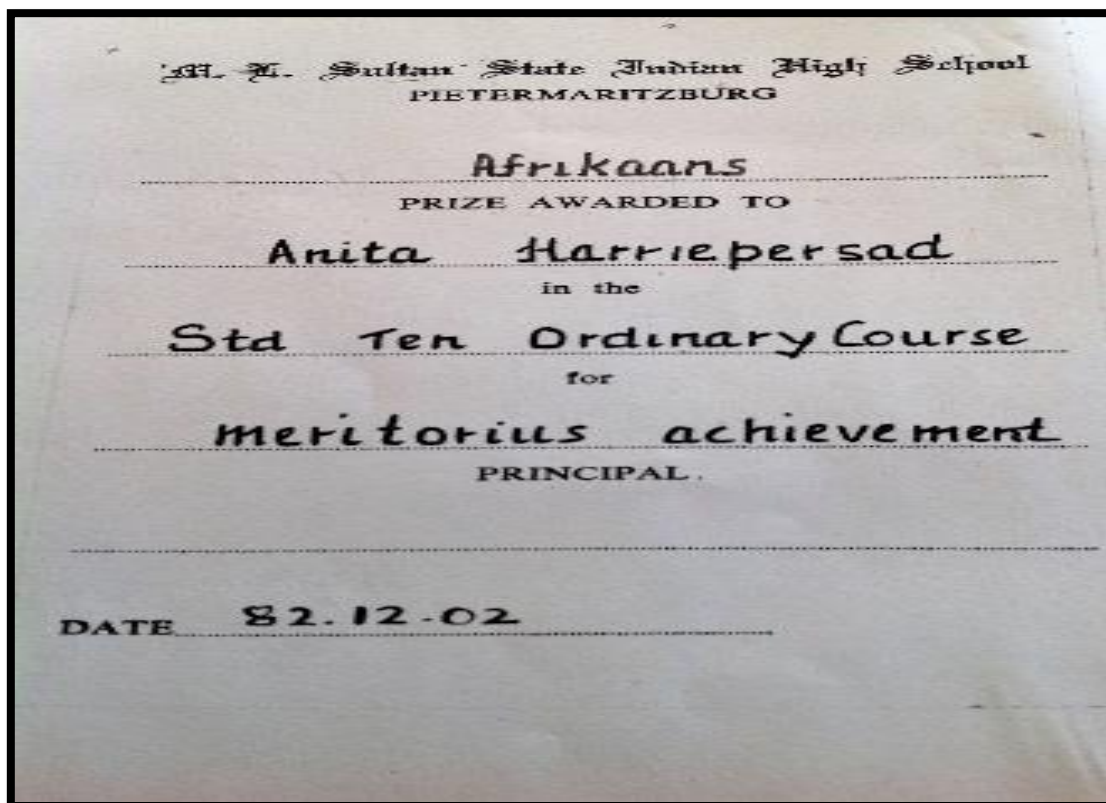


Figure 5.8 The certificate I received in matric for Afrikaans

5.4 I Shall Get Well⁴⁶

These profound words “I Shall Get Well” are spoken by Colin after he visited the secret garden. The magic in the garden brought a pink glow to his normally pale skin and this “glow spread to his neck and face like a hand with a lovely touch” and he cries out “I shall get well” (Burnett, 1969, p. 174). I also felt this glow of warmth spreading over me as I ended my high school career and looked forward to the possibilities of my future career as a radiographer.

In this chapter, I related my high school experiences, which began on a happy note but took a turn for the worst when my mother refused to allow me to study music. I then became involved in the boycotts against the learning of Afrikaans and during that period, I lost interest in school. This resulted in me not getting a university entrance pass so I repeated my matric year, getting excellent marks and being accepted to study radiography. Writing about my high school experiences transported me from the present to the past and back to the present as I told my story. I explored and discovered my multiple identities as a demoralised primary school learner, then an invigorated high school pupil, then a disappointed young girl and, finally, to a successful and content young woman.

In the next chapter, I highlight my lived experiences as a student radiographer and the many scary but exciting situations I found myself in. I also speak about getting married and having a child who was born prematurely, and how my faith and strength helped me in giving him the will to survive. I highlight my experiences as a new teacher, firstly being ridiculed by the principal but then admired for my academic achievements. I end the chapter on a happy note when I share my experiences of moving into a tertiary institution as a teacher educator.

Looking at the award and the certificate, takes me back to the heading I gave to this chapter and the poem I wrote to commence it. It reminded me so much of Mary and her growth and healing process. It makes me think about the joy Mary felt when springtime came to the moors. She became healthier, stronger, confident, and pleasant. Colin was practising to walk again. The power of magic in the garden and nature contributed significantly to their healing. So, too, my accolades and the recognition I received in my new school helped me to heal my injured and hurt soul. It was my springtime and it helped to make me better.

⁴⁶ “I shall get well! I shall get well! he cried” (Burnett, 1969, p. 174).

CHAPTER SIX: NEST BUILDING⁴⁷

*There is joy on earth in the secret garden
The grey wall is changing, the grass is greener,
Swelling leaf buds on rose branches which seemed dead
Ten thousand green points pushing through the mould
It's part of the springtime you know, this nest-building is
Us is nest-building too⁴⁸*

6.1 There Was Every Joy on Earth⁴⁹

I thought that the title of “Nest Building” and the poem I developed with words and phrases from *The Secret Garden*, were befitting to commence this chapter because of my varied lived experiences. This chapter in the novel is about the red-breasted robin that lived in a tree in the secret garden and was busy building a nest. The activities of the robin resembled my career changes when I moved between highly different career paths. I was like the robin flying around picking up twigs and grass, hopping around, and putting them all together to create a nest.

Despite my first career being not what I had initially wanted to do, it was a very exciting time in my life. My grey wall was changing and I was venturing into the world, full of hope and promise. There was joy in the secret garden and there was joy in my life because my buds were starting to bloom like the flowers in springtime in the secret garden. That is why I gave the heading, “There Was Joy on Earth,” to this opening section of this chapter.

From my reading, I learned that, through a personal history self-study approach, I would be able to recreate some of my noteworthy lived experiences to help me understand how these experiences might have influenced my development and contributed to my pedagogical actions (Samaras et al., 2004). To this end, in the previous chapter I gave a rendition of my high school experiences and the many happy times interspersed with periods of disappointment and sadness, promise and hope. It was a rather intoxicating period in my life and, whilst I enjoyed it, there were times when I was

⁴⁷ “Nest Building” (Burnett, 1969. P. 125).

⁴⁸ “There was every joy on earth in the secret garden. The grey wall is changing, the grass is greener, Swelling leaf buds on rose branches which seemed dead. Ten thousand green points pushing through the mould. It is part of the springtime you know, this nest-building is. Us is nest-building too” (Burnett, 1969, pp. 130).

⁴⁹ “There was every joy on earth in the secret garden that morning” (Burnett, 1969, p. 130).

frustrated because I was prevented from doing what I wanted. I showed my frustration by acting in an irresponsible manner, and the price I paid for reckless behaviour was wasting a year of my life to repeat my matric year. Nevertheless, I believed that everything happened for the better because I achieved good results and was accepted to study radiography.

In this chapter, I narrate my various experiences of being a student radiographer, a mother and housewife, a part-time lecturer at a technical college, then a college of education lecturer, then back to being a high school teacher and, finally, a teacher educator. I show how I learned from each lived experience, and how these experiences impacted on my development to my present career as a teacher educator.

6.2 The Sky Was Blue Again⁵⁰

I gave this section this title because I felt just as Mary did. She awakened very early on the morning that spring began—when the skies were blue for the first time after the rains, the air was full of expectant sunshine and growth, the green shoots were sprouting everywhere, and it was a joyous sight. I was beginning my career and it was full of promise after all the bleak weather in my life.

6.2.1 Student Radiographer

Being accepted to study radiography at King Edward VIII hospital in Durban was really an achievement for me but, at the same time, slightly daunting. It was the first time I was going to live away from home and make my own decisions. It was thrilling for me to move into my room at the R. K. Khan hospital residence that normally housed the nurses. We could not stay at King Edward residence because under the old apartheid regime, it was designated for black students and we had to stay at an Indian hospital residence. It was a different experience for me to have communal bathroom facilities and eat meals with others in a huge dining hall.

There were only six student radiographers staying in the residence amongst many nurses, so the radiography students formed a close relationship. We all had come from distant areas and, whilst there were students who had been staying at the residence for a while, three of us were new. The older students took us under their wing and, despite the fact we all had our own rooms, at night we would drag our mattresses into one room and all sleep together. It was very fulfilling for me because of the family-like environment that I had yearned for, all curled up together and eating chocolate at

⁵⁰ “On the very first when the sky was blue again, Mary awakened very early” (Burnett, 1969, p. 127).

night in our beds. One of the older students lived in Stanger, which was not very far from Durban, and her mother worked at the radiography department in Stanger hospital. At least twice a week, she sent hot cooked meals for us by ambulance from Stanger. With all these positive experiences, I did not miss home very much and was beginning to enjoy living in Durban. Below is a photograph of me in my radiography uniform (Figure 6.1).



Figure 6.1 Me in my radiography uniform

Wearing this uniform made me feel exceptionally important, and my self-confidence grew in leaps and bounds. Sometimes after work, I went into the Durban city centre and, when people noticed me in my uniform and even spoke to me about radiography, I felt very accomplished—now, I was someone who other people wanted to know about. I was no longer the child who was made to feel humiliated and picked on because I had an untidy vocabulary book or could not sew properly. I was pursuing a reputable career that commanded respect. My favourite quote (see Chapter 1, Footnote 2) from *The Secret Garden* was being played out. I was finding out “amazing things” about myself and I anticipated “more astounding things will be brought to light”—I could not believe that this “strange new thing” was happening to me (Burnett, 1969, p. 137).

It was most exhilarating for me when we travelled from R. K. Khan to King Edward hospital in the morning via ambulance. We used to tell the ambulance driver to switch on his siren and red lights and we weaved through the traffic and giggled when the other cars moved out of the way to let the ambulance pass. That came to a stop when, three months later, my mother surprised me at the hospital with a new car for me.

6.2.2 My First Car

I was beside myself with joy that I had my own car. I felt more grown-up and independent than ever before. Below is a photograph of my first car (Figure 6.2).



Figure 6.2 My first car

This photograph of my first car was very symbolic because it denoted my advancement into adulthood and self-reliance. I could not believe my good fortune in having my own car and also being able to support myself financially. It felt very exhilarating to fill petrol in my car and travel to work. It was empowering because, as the tyres in the car turned around whilst driving, so my life was turning and taking me to different places and different phases in my life. Every time I got into my car I would smile because I realised that I was the master of my own destiny. I could choose where I wanted to go, and do whatever I wanted to do. Whilst this was very liberating, a small part of me realised that with freedom comes responsibility so although I was independent I also had to be careful what choices I made. I realise now, on looking back at my life, that my home environment

and my strict upbringing as well as the values instilled in me by my mother and my extended family were the morals by which I lived my life in the straight and narrow.

6.2.3 My First Patient

What was not so joyful for me was when, in between attending lectures, we had to work in the x-ray department learning how to x-ray patients. On my very first day, I was pushed in the deep end and had to work by myself because there had been a horrific train accident and injured people were coming in by the dozens. Many patients died on the x-ray tables that day, but what was most awful for me was an incident I experienced. I was going to x-ray a patient and when I walked in the x-ray room, there was an elderly woman sitting up on the bed, covered from the waist down with a sheet. I was relieved that she did not look badly injured because she was happily speaking to a companion who had accompanied her. I had to remove the sheet to x-ray her leg and when I removed the sheet I experienced such a shock that I had to leave the room. She was mangled from her waist down, and you could not tell the difference between skin and bone—basically, there was one big mess where her legs used to be. I experienced panic and ran from the room. I spoke to the senior radiographer in charge, but she reassured me that it was part of my job and after you get over the initial shock, your mind and body adjust and you become controlled. I went back and x-rayed the woman but I was still in shock and when I went home that night I could not sleep. I mulled over the fact that I would never get used to it.

Nevertheless, it was a learning experience for me. I really admired the elderly patient who, despite the extent of her injuries, was quietly taking it in her stride. She could have been screaming and performing but she realised she was hurt and had to remain calm. I learned a lot from that patient that day. I learned that to get worked up and complain does not help a situation. I was the kind of person who got excited and made myself agitated and lose control, but a badly injured older woman just sat there and waited patiently to be helped. It was a very moving experience because I learned that sometimes in life you have to accept things that you cannot change. I was the kind of person who would try to change the impossible and get cross when it did not change. That day I changed my attitude and came to the realisation that, in my life, I would have to accept certain things as they are. This experience prepared me for many other experiences that I was to encounter in life.

6.2.4 Frightening Experience

The other frightening experience for me was the first time I had to witness a postmortem. I had to do a subject, anatomy and physiology, which required a study of the human body. We were lectured to by a surgeon who lectured in the medical school that was part of the hospital. He was a very strict lecturer and warned us before he took us to see cadavers in tanks at the medical school. Cadavers are human bodies that are donated to science so that medical students can do autopsies on them and learn about the human body. They are preserved in huge tanks—sometimes whole and sometimes in separate body parts. The first time we went into the cadaver laboratory I was horrified speechless. I was sure I was going to collapse but what prevented me was that another student collapsed and the lecturer asked everyone else to leave her on the floor and not help her up. She lay there for almost 20 minutes and when she regained consciousness she realised she was lying on the floor in a cadaver laboratory and became hysterical. She was so traumatised that she had to receive psychological counselling. I was not putting myself through that so I put on a brave front and every time I felt weak, I thought about the elderly patient with crushed legs and told myself to remain calm. I hated the lecturer at that time because I felt he was heartless and cruel but I realised, later, that he had to adopt an indifferent approach or what he did might affect him emotionally. I felt he had no respect for human life but I suppose he had to be that way because I also became like that after a while. Not that I did not have respect for human life, but I adopted an indifferent attitude that helped me cope with the emotional and psychological side of my job.

Below is a photograph of me (Figure 6.3) in a lead apron and protective goggles taking an x-ray. We had to wear lead aprons and protective goggles to protect ourselves from the harmful effects of radiation emitted from the x-ray machines.



Figure 6.3 Me performing an x-ray procedure

When I looked at this photograph, it reminded me how far I had come from being a nervous young child, lacking in self-confidence, to a self-assured adult involved in saving peoples' lives. I was also able to use sophisticated and technologically advanced x-ray machinery that required knowledge of science and technology. I was required to work in the ultrasound and radio physics departments as part of my training and the look of joy on the mothers' faces when they saw their babies on the screen was indescribable. Radio physics is the department that administers radiation to patients who have cancer. It was heartbreaking for me to administer radiation to these patients, knowing that their cancer was terminal and all they were doing was trying to buy some extra time. Some patients talked to me whilst receiving their treatment, and told me that they would do anything to live longer because their children were still very young, whilst others said they were fed up and only taking the treatment to please their families. I learned a lot about terminally ill patients and this photograph of my radiography badges (Figure 6.4) triggered my mind to that time when, although I was not heartless or unsympathetic, I tried not to get emotionally involved. But now, as a mother, I do not think I could be so casual. I have suffered emotional trauma and illness in my life and I can empathise fully with those patients now. My life experiences have changed my attitude and my moral position from a casual, slightly indifferent person to a more caring empathetic person.

At the end of my first year, I met my husband and, at the age of 19, decided to get married. He was training as an electrician at Iscor in Newcastle and lived at the Iscor hostel, whilst I was living in

Durban completing my training. We could only meet on weekends and, being a student, I was required to work alternate weekends. This put a great strain on our marriage and on an emotionally laden impulse, I decided to resign from radiography.

6.2.5 Resignation

The day I resigned, I was not too emotionally perturbed and the joy on my husband's face lessened the blow that my career was over. When I told my mother, she was heartbroken and her pain and disappointment in me were visible on her face. I promised myself then that I would make amends to my mother and study and make something of myself even if it took the rest of my life. My husband and I moved to Newcastle but, after the excitement of setting up my own home faded, I became restless and yearned for intellectual stimulation. I had kept my radiography badges and I would take them out and look at them.



Figure 6.4 My radiography badges

When I looked at the badges now, I was nostalgic about my lost career but, on the other hand, I have found much delight in my teaching career. These badges represented a part of my life that was so different to my teaching career. It was exciting but also sad when patients died or were disfigured or crippled. I often wondered how my career as a radiographer would have turned out. I am sure I would have made a success of it because I always had a drive to succeed in anything that I did. However, I did have moments when I have deep feelings of regret because I thought I might have acted impulsively. Dwelling on this did me no good and, as I learned from my experience with the elderly woman with crushed legs, there was no point in hanging onto something that you could not

change—so I put it aside and moved on. Writing this personal history awakened a lot of repressed feelings and regret in me, especially when I looked at my radiography badges.

6.3 I Know It Was Something Nice⁵¹

6.3.1 Technical College Lecturer

In *The Secret Garden*, Mary utters the words above when she likens her cousin, Colin, to the green shoots and buds that were peeping through the ground. Colin had really changed from a nagging, sickly spoiled boy to a happy young man, curious about everything that happened in the secret garden. He was becoming quite a likeable person and I likened this to my first attempt at teaching. Whilst I was initially intimidated, I took to it very well and decided that I wanted to be in the teaching profession.

My husband was attending technical college and studying for his apprenticeship and I envied him. I decided to enrol at the local technical college for some courses in commerce and registered for an N4 certificate in commerce. I attended college during the day and was stimulated by the intellectual inspiration I received from the course and the joy of being with the other students. I passed my N4, and was motivated more than ever to continue with the N courses and completed my N5 and N6. I had to do 18 months of practical work experience to qualify for a Diploma in Commerce and, because I was the only student who had completed up to N6 level, the college offered me a part-time lecturing post in accounting. I was extremely nervous at first because I had to lecture to adults but, after a few weeks, I developed my confidence and I told myself if I could witness a postmortem I could do anything. As time went by, I felt an old hand at teaching and thoroughly enjoyed myself lecturing.

It felt as if I was cut out for teaching, and I decided to pursue my studies in teaching. Unfortunately, my husband had completed his apprenticeship and Iscor had no position for him so we had to relocate to Pietermaritzburg. On moving back to Pietermaritzburg, I had mixed feelings. Whilst I was happy being with the family again, I yearned for the times in Newcastle where I had my own little home and could do as I pleased. Although we lived on our own, the obligation of associating with family put pressure on me because I liked my space and time to myself. Once again, I thought about my patient and decided I could do nothing about the situation and moping about it would only make me unhappy, so I put it aside and carried on.

⁵¹ “I know it was something nice” (Burnett, 1969, p. 134).

6.4 The Little Fox Cub⁵²

6.4.1 My Baby

Colin was extremely excited when Dickon, the village boy, brought his pet animals to visit him. Dickon loved his animals and proudly introduced each animal to Colin. I gave this section this particular heading because the section is about my first baby, and I likened my baby to the little fox cub.

I soon forgot about everything when I discovered I was going to have a baby. I looked forward to my pregnancy but nature interrupted and I found out that I was diabetic. Immediately, my thoughts flew to my grandfather and I was convinced that I was being punished for taunting him and teasing him because his legs had to be amputated because of diabetes. The doctors told me it was hereditary and I had to go on insulin at the age of 22. It was a very difficult pregnancy and I spent many days of it in hospital. I was constantly ill with a high blood glucose level, and my blood pressure was also very high. In my 28th week of the pregnancy, I had to be hospitalised due to high blood pressure and high blood sugar levels. On the 25th March 1988, I received the most devastating news whilst in hospital. The doctor wrote on my medical records, “TOP.” I had no idea what that was, but the pitying looks I got from the nurses on duty cautioned me that it was not good news.

When my husband came to visit, I was so distraught that he immediately insisted the nurses tell him what the problem was. They told him that TOP stood for “termination of pregnancy.” When he told me that, I was beside myself and cried hysterically. He phoned the doctor who explained that my life was threatened by the pregnancy because my blood pressure and blood sugar levels were rocketing and the baby was not doing well. He said there was no movement from the baby but there was a very faint heartbeat and if he did not terminate the pregnancy, it could be fatal for me.

I refused to accept this news and insisted that my husband find another doctor and, by the grace of God, he managed to find another doctor who said he would do an emergency caesarean section and try to save me. However, he did explain to us that if the baby survived, it would be a miracle because the baby was very small and would not be able to breathe on his own. After the operation, I was told my baby weighed only 1,06 kilograms and was 27 centimetres in length. He was in the neonatal

⁵² ““This is the little fox cub,’ he said, rubbing the little reddish animal’s head” (Burnett, 1969, p. 130).

intensive care unit on life support. The baby could not breathe on his own, and his lungs were not developed. The doctor told us to expect the worst.

Not once during this time did I ever give up hope. I was positive that my baby was going to survive. I healed, but my baby remained in an incubator for three months and in those three months, I never left his side. I sat beside that incubator, day and night, and slept on a chair only when my body could not take the fatigue anymore. Whilst sitting next to his incubator I had to feed him via a nasal drip, one drop at a time. He could not tolerate formula because it was too heavy—he only tolerated breast milk. Due to the fact that I was not feeding him, my breast milk dried and, despite medication, I had very little milk.

He was losing weight because he regurgitated the formula yet he needed the sustenance, and his chances of survival were getting slimmer by the minute. There were other mothers with babies in the neonatal unit, and their babies were getting well and they had an abundance of breast milk. I was desperate for my child to survive and one day I broke down in the ward and literally begged the other mothers to donate some of their breast milk to my child. That day I saw human kindness in all its glory. Every mother of every race expressed her breast milk and donated it to my child.

Although he was only gaining a few grams every day, to me that was enough. I prayed as I never had before and maintained being positive. I sat beside that incubator and talked to my baby and told him how much I loved him and how he was going to grow up and go to school. The nurses became so used to my chatter that eventually they accepted me sitting there talking to my baby, instead of giving me strange looks. Somehow, I had the feeling within me that my baby understood and heard what I was telling him and that my positivity was keeping him alive.

6.4.2 The Miracle Bracelet

On a very hot Sunday morning, I went home for a while to shower and change and when I got back to the hospital and went to my baby's incubator, he was not there. I panicked and just as I was about to start screaming hysterically, the most wonderful sight met my eyes. All the nurses in the ward walked in with my baby dressed in white, with no tubes and oxygen, and in a little baby trolley. However, the best part was when they put a little plastic identity bracelet around his arm with his name and details. They also stuck a name tag on his little cot that the nurses in the hospital gave to him because I had not yet named him. These are photographs of the plastic identity bracelet (Figure 6.5) and the name tag (Figure 6.6).



Figure 6.5 My baby's plastic hospital bracelet



Figure 6.6 My baby's name on his cot

The bracelet was symbolic of the fact that my baby was going to survive and that he now had an identity and was going to grow up and be a person. Once again, the thread that runs throughout my work was reinforced:

More astounding things will be brought to light. At first people refuse to believe that a strange new thing can be done, then they begin to hope it can be done, then they see it can be done—then it is done. (Burnett, 1969, p. 137)

The doctors and nurses at the hospital said that medically there was a very slim chance of him surviving and, if he did, he would always have respiratory problems, delayed milestones, and retarded cognitive development. He never experienced any of that except that he needed some remedial education in his first year of school.

Three months after his birth, he was discharged from hospital weighing just 1,8 kilograms, and 32 centimetres in length. I treasured that plastic bracelet and name tag and put them into a little box that I guard with my life. Every now and then, I open it just to reassure myself that my baby was indeed a miracle. When my son turned 21, I took out the bracelet and read him a story I wrote to him about his birth. I explained that I never gave up on him.

6.4.3 Teacher by Day, Mother by Night and Student Whenever Time Permits: The Juggler

My son grew healthy and strong and two years later, I had a little girl. My husband started his own electrical contracting business and I chose to stay at home with the children and assist him with the business but, once again, the desire for intellectual stimulation got the better of me. Also, I reminded myself of the promise I made that I would make my mother proud no matter what. Spurred on by my lecturing experience at the technical college in Newcastle, I wanted to pursue a career in teaching so I registered for a Bachelor of Arts degree through the University of South Africa (Unisa), a distance learning institution in South Africa. Initially, I really found it difficult to study on my own but eventually I became accustomed to this style of learning and forged ahead. I completed my degree and took up a position as a temporary lecturer of accounting at the local technical college in Pietermaritzburg. I thoroughly enjoyed it but because I did not have a professional qualification as a teacher, I could not be employed further. I secured another position as a temporary teacher in a high school. I had trained as an English and history teacher, but the school was in dire straits. They had matriculants who did not have a teacher for accounting, business studies, and economics. They allowed me to teach English and history in the lower grades and asked me teach the commerce subjects to the matriculants.

I was very intimidated by the other qualified teachers. Being a housewife and mother for so many years, I lacked the finesse and professionalism of a teacher and was criticised by qualified teachers much younger than me. Rather than demotivating me, this encouraged me to be the best that I could and I worked really hard whilst studying for my higher education diploma, juggling my teaching with caring for my children and assisting my husband in the business. I was rewarded finally when I completed the 2-year diploma in one year with 14 distinctions. I also achieved a mark of 94% for

history, subject didactics, which was the first time ever that a student got such a high mark in the subject at Unisa. Suddenly I became a celebrity.

Unisa contacted the newspapers and held a function for me where they presented me with an award. These are pictures of the newspaper article (Figure 6.7) and the award that Unisa presented to me (Figures 6.8, 6.9, and 6.10).

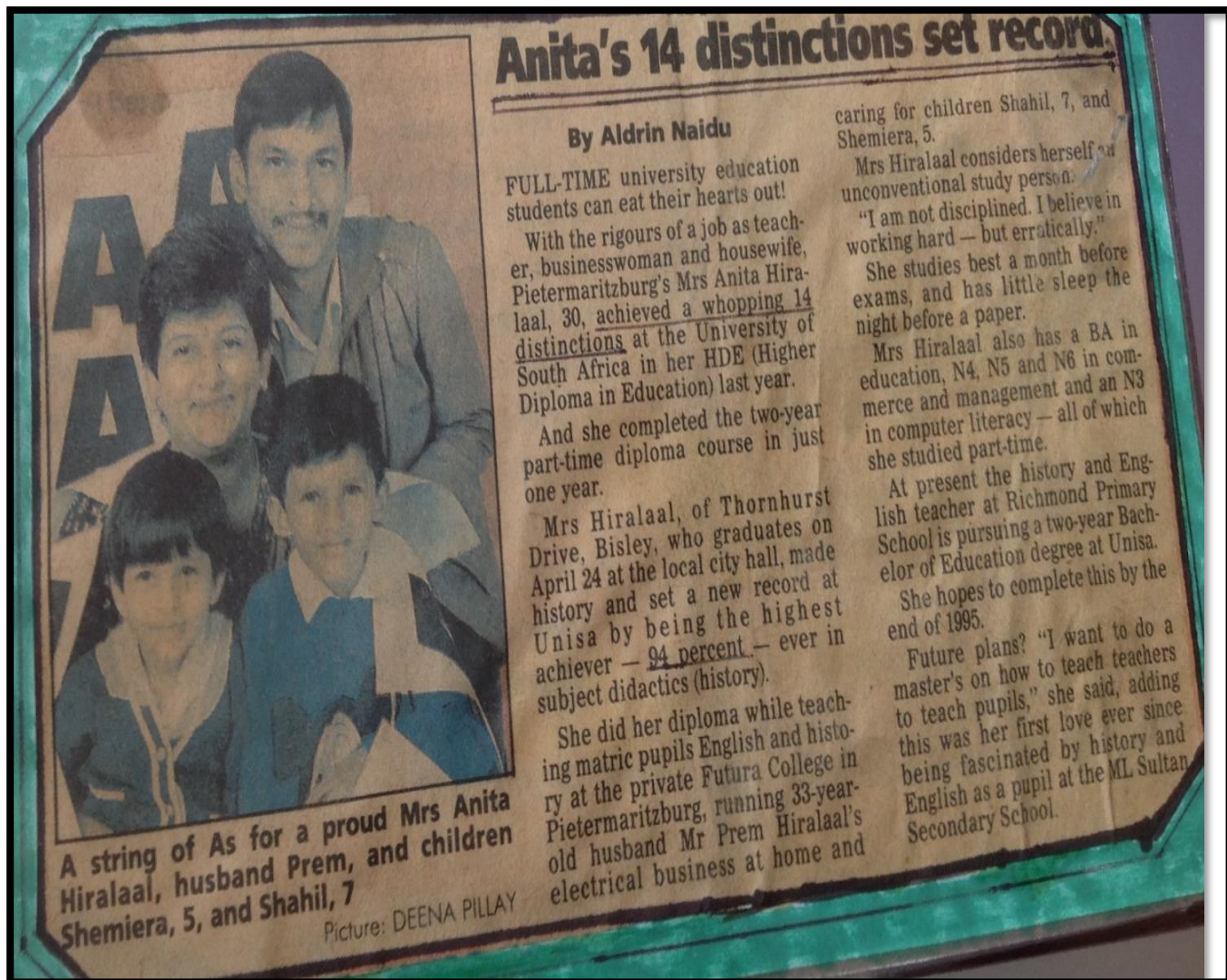


Figure 6.7 Article about me and my family after I obtained 14 distinctions

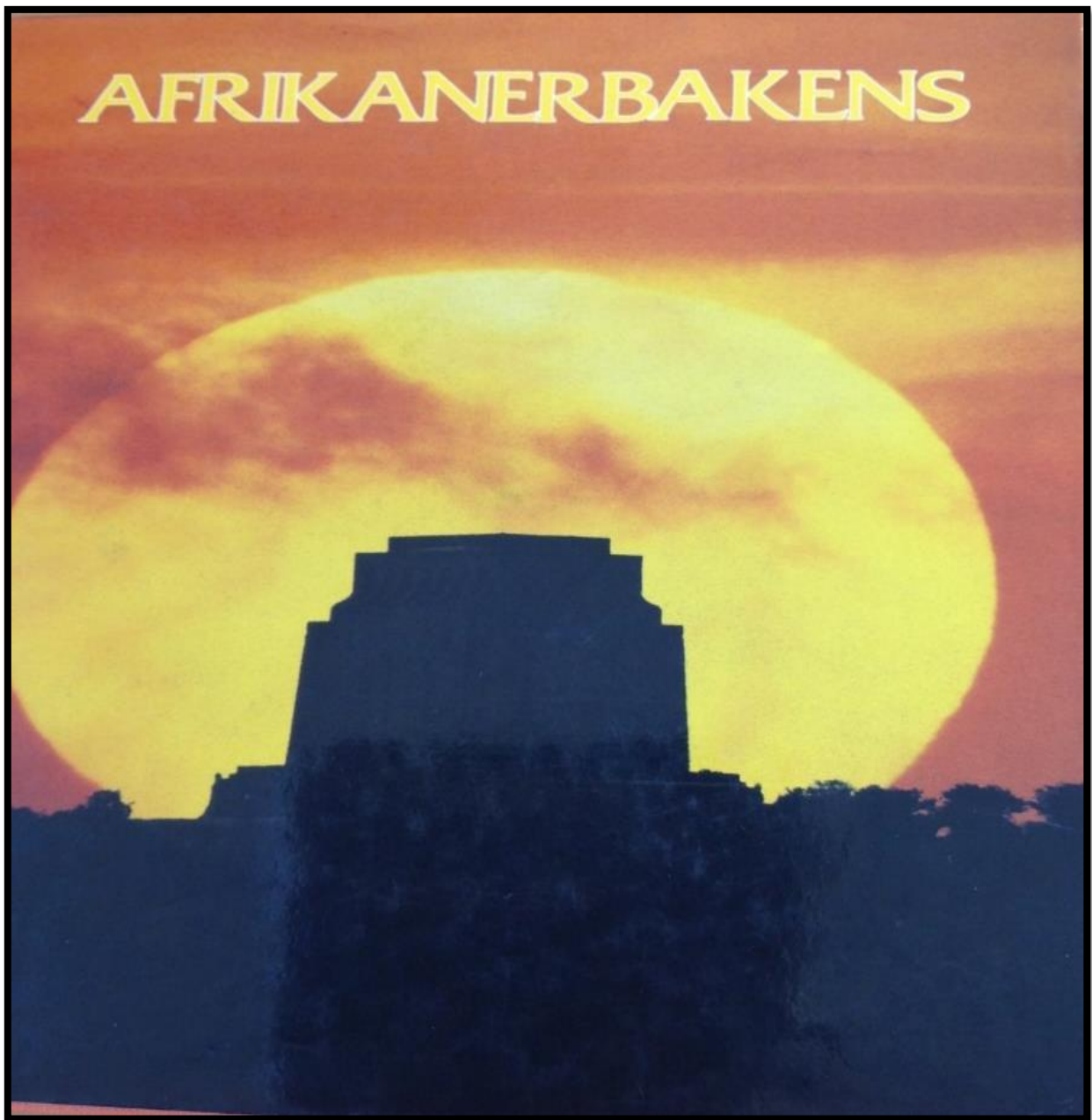


Figure 6.8 My book award from Unisa



FEDERASIE VAN AFRIKAANSE KULTUURVERENIGINGE

GESKIEDENISTOEKENNING

Toegeken aan:

Mev. A. Giralal

vir die beste prestasie in Vakdidaktiek:
Geskiedenis in

1995

aan:

Unisa

16 Maart 1995

D A T U M

[Handwritten Signature]
HOOF-UITVOERENDE BEAMPTTE

Figure 6.9 My certificate from Unisa



Figure 6.10 My plaque from Unisa

It came as a surprise to me that I had the potential to achieve so much, and was so widely recognised. When I started my teaching job, all the self-negativity and lack of confidence that I experienced in primary school had come crushing down on me. It weighed upon me so heavily that I loathed waking up in the morning and going to school. But these accolades made me feel like a huge weight had been lifted off my shoulders. My self-concept improved dramatically and I felt free. When this article was published, I was still a teacher at a high school but when I was asked by the journalist what my future plans were, I said, “I want to teach teachers how to teach their pupils.” I regarded this statement as being profound and most significant in my development as a teacher educator because, at that time, I had no idea I would eventually become a teacher educator.

Once the article appeared in the newspapers, my entire life changed. Spurred on by my “fame,” I subsequently completed a Bachelor of Education honours degree. This was a 2-year course but I completed it in one year and passed with distinction. Once again, Unisa contacted the newspapers and published articles about me. These are photographs of the articles (Figure 6.11 and 6.12).



Figure 6.11 Newspaper article when I passed my BEd Honours with distinction

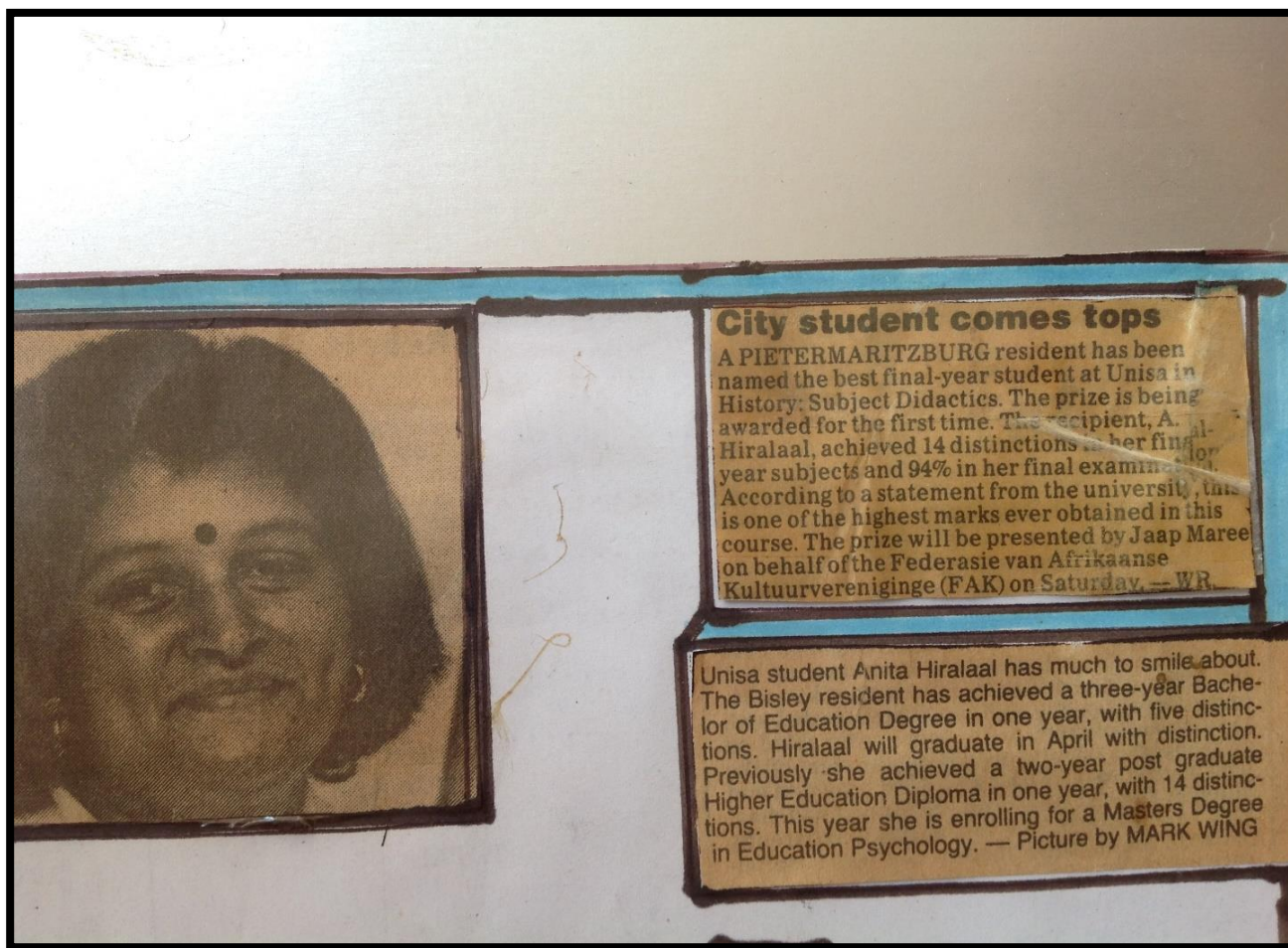


Figure 6.12 Newspaper article in the local paper

The title of one of these newspaper articles was “Teacher Juggles Hectic Lifestyle.” I now realise that this image of a juggler portrays my character very aptly because, to this day, I still juggle many tasks.

What stood out in my memory most clearly was the respect that I was accorded by the principal who, previously, treated me like an imbecile and by the teachers at the school who thought that I should have stayed at home and cared for my children rather than be in a classroom. In staff meetings the principal would say, “We all should follow Anita’s example, she is a role model.” True to his word, other teachers including him began registering for degrees and diplomas. I did not realise then that I was role modelling certain behaviours that had a positive impact on the rest of the staff.

After these articles appeared in the newspapers, I decided to register for a master’s degree in psychology of education. At that time, there was a lot of political unrest in the town where I was teaching, and it was becoming dangerous with the army and police a constant presence outside the school. Fortunately, a position as a lecturer of accounting and business studies became available at

a college of education. I applied for the post. I was selected but I had to resign from my post as a permanent educator before I occupied the new post. On arriving at the college, I was intimidated initially but I tackled my job with zest and enthusiasm. In a few short weeks, I was extremely comfortable with the students and they were happy with me. I formed a close bond with the students and instead of the lecturer–student divide, we had more of a family relationship because many of the students were mature women with families of their own. Then, due to political decisions, all colleges of education were closed and staff transferred to schools and government libraries.

6.4.4 High School Teacher

I chose to go to a school where I taught accounting and business studies from Grade 8 to Grade 12. However, on arriving at the school the principal made a comment to me that perturbed me so much, that I absolutely dreaded my time there. He said to me, “Remember these are not your African students from your teacher college, there are mostly Indian learners at this school. The parents are very involved in the school and contribute a lot of money to the school.” I was deeply troubled by his narrow-minded racist comment, and made a decision immediately that I would eventually put him in his place. I taught the learners so well that I was regarded as the best accounting and business studies teacher in a school of 1,500 learners. I worked there for two years but I always felt that I was regarded as being inferior because I came from a black college and constantly had to prove myself. Whilst teaching there, I looked around for another post and in the midst of the academic year, I resigned from the school. The principal did everything in his power to persuade me to stay but I reminded him about what he told me on my first day. I was glad to leave the school.

I took up a position as an accounting, economic and management sciences (EMS), and business studies teacher at the new school, and the welcome I got on my first day set the pace for my stay at this school. The principal introduced me to the staff who welcomed me warmly. The principal was aware of my academic achievements and regarded the school as privileged to have me on the staff.

I admired the principal because he did not treat me as if I was inferior, and gave me room to grow in the school. The children, who were mostly black, immediately forged a bond with me and even if I became angry with them, they always treated me with respect and gratitude. It was a very rewarding experience teaching at this school, but I also had to look out for my own academic advancement. I wanted to get back into teacher education, which I realised was my passion because I had so much to offer the student teachers. A position became available at the college of education where I worked previously. It was now a university of technology. The day I informed the staff and

students of my resignation at the school was indeed a very emotional day, and my learners were in tears. This was the card given to me by the learners in my class (Figure 6.13).

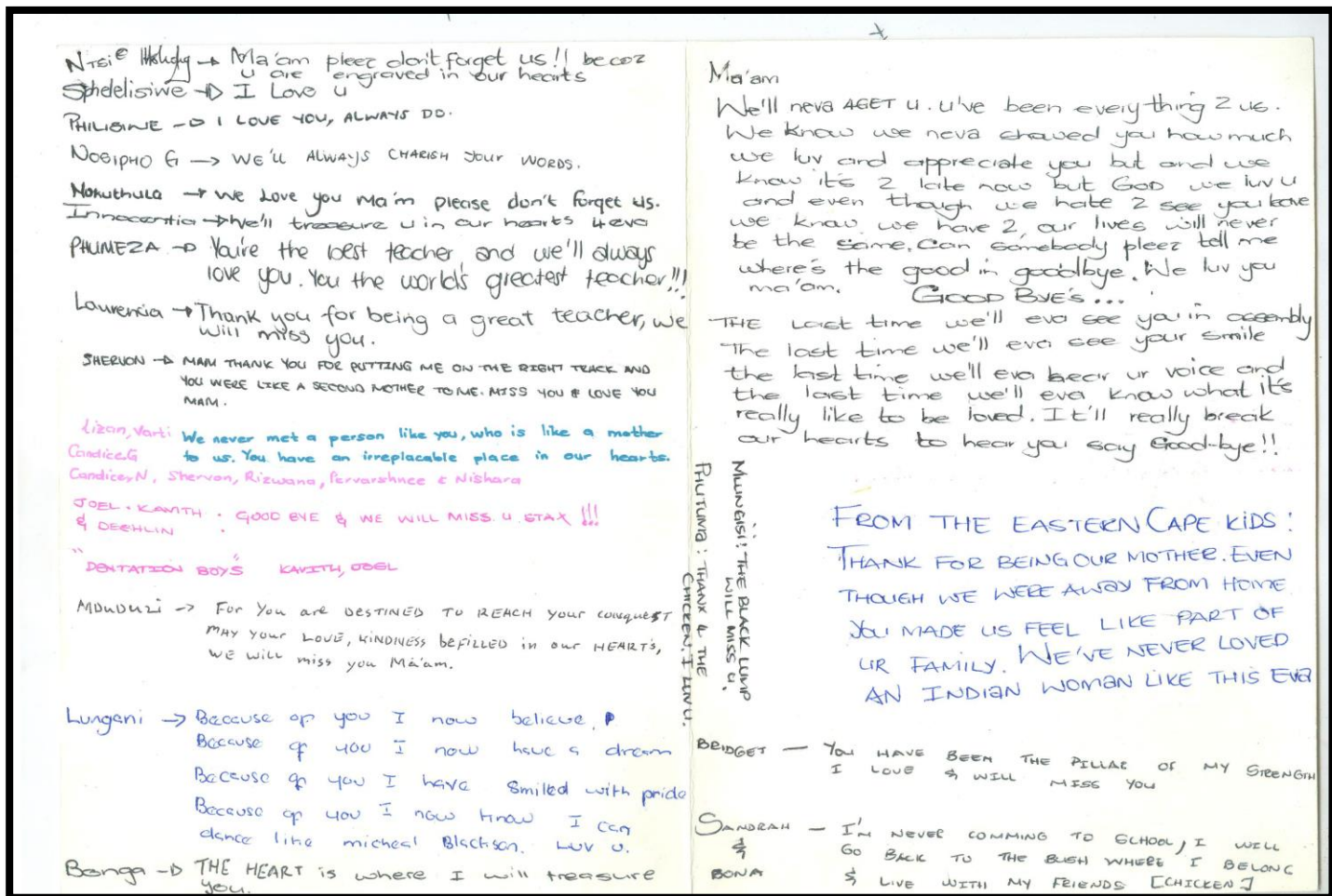


Figure 6.13 Card from my class learners

Apart from this card, learners and members of staff wrote me cards and letters (Figure 6.14 and 6.15). I was sad but, at the same time, I was happy because I was going to do what I said I would do: "Teach teachers how to teach."

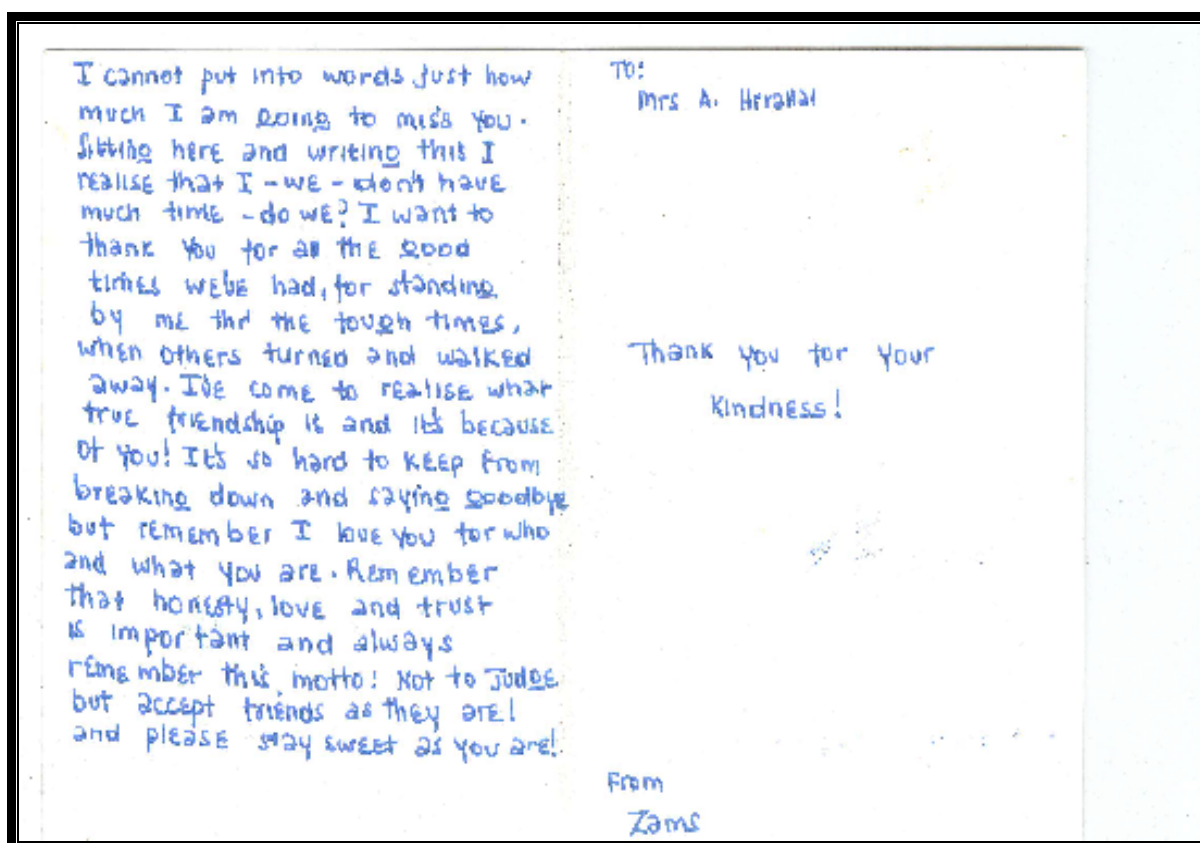


Figure 6.14 Letter from a staff member

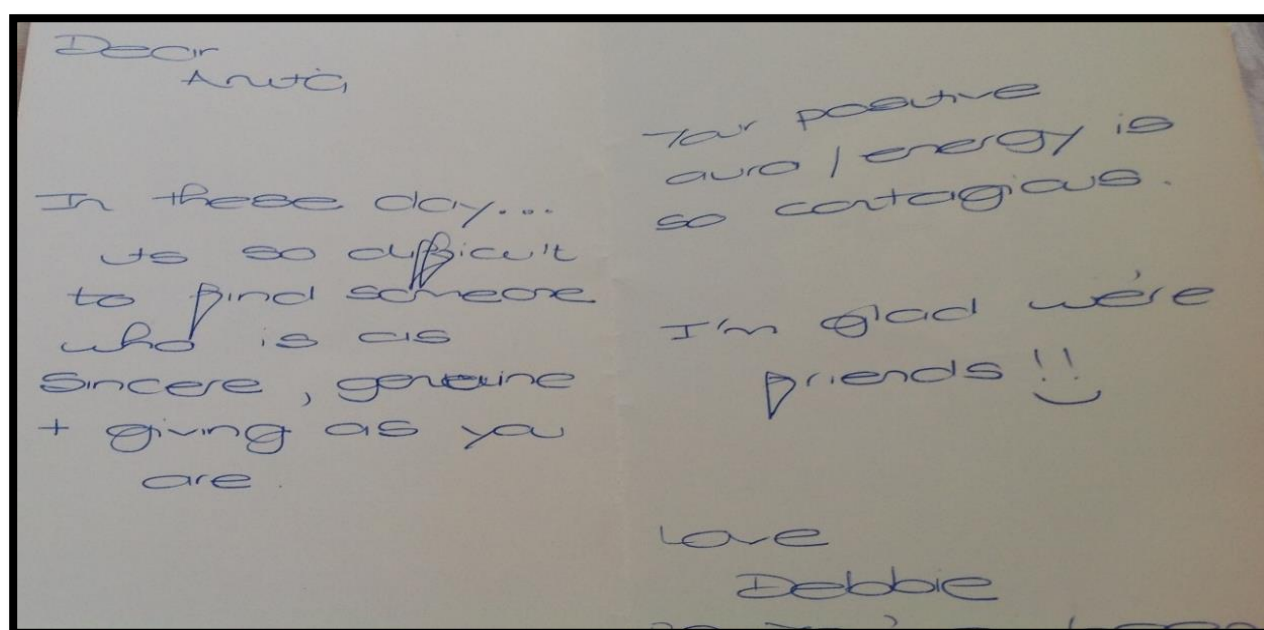


Figure 6.15 Letter from a staff member

6.4.5 Teacher Educator

I have been employed as a teacher educator from when I left that school in 2008, until the present. I lecture accounting to student teachers completing a 4-year Bachelor of Education degree. I have a very good rapport with my students and with the staff. I am a hardworking, dedicated lecturer and

the students enjoy my lectures very much. Apart from lecturing to my students, I provide them with pastoral care in that many of them come from far away and, for some, it is their first time away from home. They see me as a mother figure and come to me with their problems, and I go out of my way to assist them.

What my students enjoy, is the fact that I always believe in them and encourage them. Accounting is not a simple subject, and some of them are studying it for the first time or completed school many years ago, so their knowledge of the subject is far below that of the rest of the students. I provide extra lessons for them and ensure that they benefit from the tutorial programme offered by the university. I have been instrumental in developing postgraduate programmes so that students can further their education at the same institution.

When I commenced employment as a teacher educator, I had a very high-handed attitude because I had been treated like a celebrity at the school. My students at the school passed very well because I provided all the knowledge for them, and I was very competent with my subject knowledge. I brought this same teaching style and attitude to the university and taught my students like high school learners. I knew that many changes had occurred in the education field over the years, and that the university subscribed to student-centred teaching and learning and technology-mediated learning, which were social constructivist approaches. However, I assumed that I would eventually adopt these principles.

I attended numerous workshops and learned that student-centred learning involves giving students freedom to find things out for themselves and, in so doing, take responsibility for their own learning. I became aware that students had to be given the choice of deciding what they learned, how they learned, and how they would be assessed. I knew that I had to involve students in the lessons as much as possible. Whilst I knew about these teaching approaches in my mind, I thought I was putting it into practice in my teaching—so I was merrily carrying on with my teaching, handing out thick wads of notes in my attempt to provide students with as much information as possible. In the next chapter, I substantiate how I was sorely mistaken.

6.5 Tha'st Got No Time to Lose⁵³

These words are uttered by Dickon at the end of the chapter, "Nest Building," in *The Secret Garden*, to the red-breasted robin that was hurriedly picking up twigs to build his nest before his partner laid her eggs. I found these words the most appropriate to close this chapter on my different career paths. I moved from one career to another hurriedly, which resembled the robin rushing around and building his nest. I had also felt that there was no time to waste.

In this chapter, I narrated my experiences of my first career as a student radiographer, and highlighted the lessons I learned from the experiences. I then revealed how I became a high school teacher, and all my achievements while studying towards my teaching qualification. Finally, I introduced readers to my present career as a teacher educator in a university of technology. I began this chapter with a poem on nest building and, indeed, I did nest build. Moving from career to career, reaping the rewards of the lived experiences, was preparing me for my role as a teacher educator. From these various experiences, I have learned that there are some things in life that I cannot change and, instead of dwelling on what I cannot change, I have learned to accept my situation and move on. I also learned that positive thinking was my greatest weapon against all the adversities I faced during my different experiences. Finally, I learned that perseverance and resolve played a very important part in my development

In the next chapter, I give a detailed account of my teaching activities for the first trimester of 2014. I provide a detailed account of my teaching activities with my students and discuss my reflections on my teaching. I video recorded my lessons, reflected on these lessons, and recorded my reflections in my reflective journal. I also introduce my critical friends and reflect on the audio- and videotaped discussions we had about my teaching. I reflected on these discussions and recorded my reflections in my journal.

⁵³ "Tha'st got no time to lose. Get on with thee lad" (Burnett, 1969, p. 135).

CHAPTER SEVEN: EXCITEMENT⁵⁴

It's so beautiful, you never saw anything so beautiful

Open the window

Perhaps we will hear golden trumpets⁵⁵

7.1 I Want Some Fresh Air⁵⁶

The title of this chapter “Excitement” is taken from the text in *The Secret Garden* because when spring comes to the moors, Mary and Colin experience much joy and excitement. Everything seems to come alive because spring brings the promise of new growth and transformation. I thought this was an appropriate title for a chapter that demonstrates my transforming self and my growth. In this chapter I highlight my growth and transforming self as a student-centred teacher educator because I was enacting my purposeful pedagogies by adopting a social constructivist approach in my teaching. Just like Colin and Mary, who want the windows open to hear the sound of spring like the sound of trumpets coming through the window, I wanted to open myself to new ways of teaching and I wanted to hear the sounds of my transforming teaching like the sound of trumpets blowing in through the open windows.

The title I gave to the opening section of this chapter, “I Want Some Fresh Air,” is about Colin, the once bedridden, paranoid young cousin of Mary in *The Secret Garden*. Colin actually wants the fresh air and he wonders why he did not go outside before. Previously, he had a mortal fear of fresh air, claiming it would make him sick and he would die. But now, the fresh air is infusing him with new life. Likewise, by exploring my personal history as narrated in the four previous chapters, I gained fresh insights as I viewed my personal history from a fresh perspective. I was now infused with new energy to develop fresh ideas and fresh perspectives on my instructional activities.

I was informed by Samaras et al. (2004) that, when teacher educators think about how they can improve their practice, exploring their personal histories can provide them with a means to better understand how their lived lives could have had a bearing on their development—and influences what they bring to the classroom. Therefore, in the previous chapter, I recounted my lived

⁵⁴ “Open the windows! he added, laughing half with joyful excitement” (Burnett, 1969, p. 162).

⁵⁵ “It’s so beautiful, you never saw anything so beautiful. Open the window, perhaps we will hear golden trumpets” (Burnett, 1969, pp. 162–163).

⁵⁶ “I want some fresh air” (Burnett, 1969, p. 158).

experiences from the start of my first career as a student radiographer, then a technical college lecturer, high school teacher, college of education lecturer, and, finally, a teacher educator at a university of technology. I expressed my learnings from each phase in my life and described the many events that occurred that could have impacted and influenced my development.

In this chapter, I respond to my second research question on what I was role modelling for my students in accounting pedagogy, and my third research question on how I could develop as a more productive role model for my students. I narrate my teaching experiences, discussions with my critical friends and colleagues, and dialogue with my accounting pedagogy students for the first trimester of 2014—commencing on 3 February 2014 and ending on 28 March 2014. I include my reflections on my teaching experiences from my reflective journal, discussions with my colleagues and critical friends, and dialogue with my students, which I represented using short vignettes and longer narrative writing. I also show how I became more consciously aware that, in order to improve my pedagogic practice, the educational values that I wanted to enact needed to be played out in my role modelling.

7.2 I'm Learning⁵⁷

Just as Mary in *The Secret Garden* is learning to speak in a Yorkshire dialect, so too was I beginning to learn about my role modelling. Figure 7.1 is a photograph of me, standing in the front of in my lecture room with my laptop, data projector, and notes. This photograph was taken by a student on my behalf on 14 September 2013. It shows my teacher-centred teaching style of standing in front of students, lecturing to them with notes and data projector. Although the students were smiling, there was no evidence of their involvement in the lesson besides sitting in their seats and listening to me. When I looked at this photograph, I felt unsettled because, for many years, I taught this way—assuming that I was acting out my student-centred educational values and beliefs. I presumed that I was the perfect accounting teacher educator. I made this presumption because the students never complained. It was only in the midst of my doctoral self-study, that I began to realise they never complained because I never asked them for their perspectives. This photograph is tangible testament to the living contradiction (Whitehead, 1989) that existed in my teacher educator practice.

⁵⁷ “I’m learning” (Burnett, 1969, p. 159).

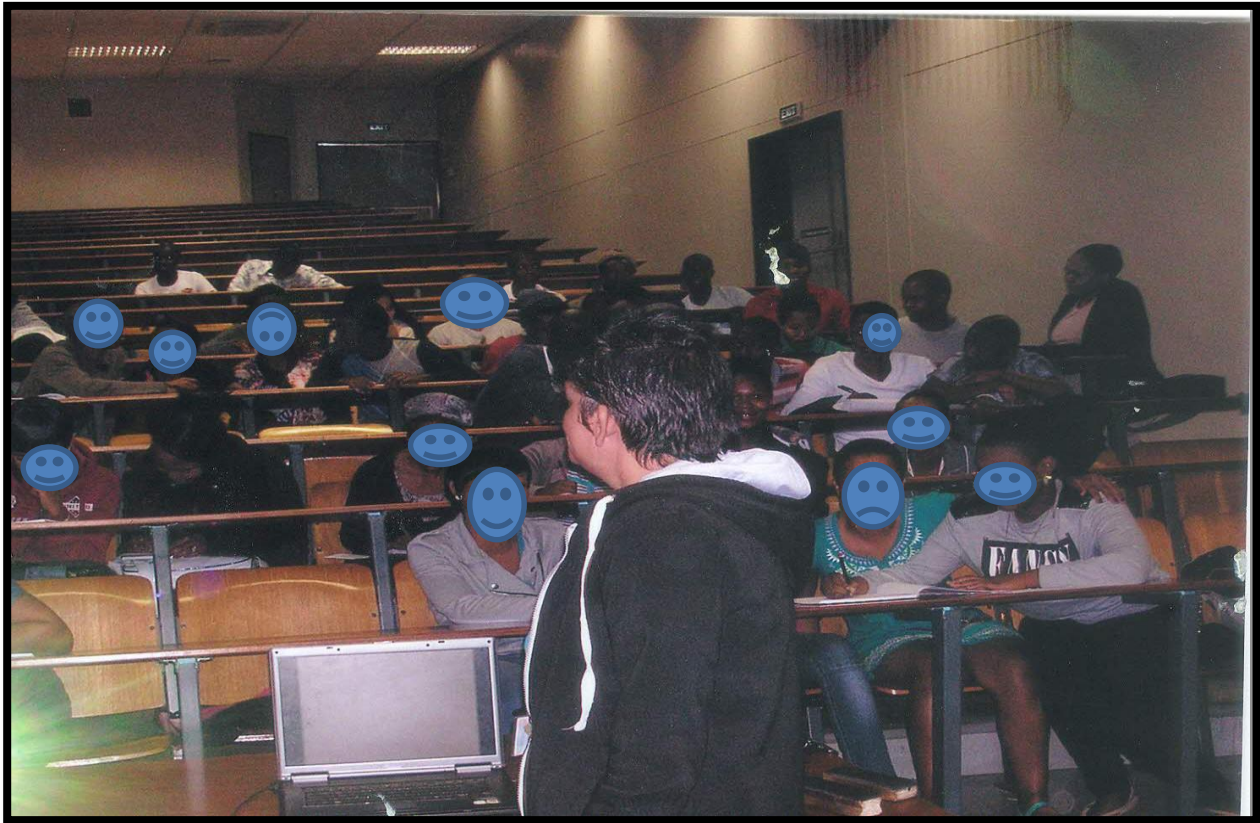


Figure 7.1 A photograph of me lecturing in a teacher-centred style (September, 2013)

It was Monday, 10 February 2014, the first day of the new academic year in the school of education at the university of technology where I work. I met my accounting education, second-year students for the first time that year for accounting pedagogy lectures. In the previous year, I had only lectured pure accounting content to them because I had made a decision not to include accounting pedagogy in the first-year curriculum given that students had a choice at the end of their first year not to take accounting as a specialisation teaching subject. I explained that in that year, 2014, they were going to study the subject of accounting pedagogy. I explained, further, that the main aim of accounting pedagogy is to help preservice teachers become adept and effective in teaching the subject, accounting (van der Stoep & Louw, 1982). Van der Stoep and Louw noted from their experience, that a major problem for inexperienced teachers was how to communicate this subject knowledge to learners in the classroom situation. Hence (as explained in Chapter One), I introduced accounting pedagogy into the accounting curriculum because I wanted my students to be prepared to teach accounting successfully.

When I asked the 92 second-year students how they would like me to teach them accounting pedagogy, the class was silent. I realised that the students were surprised because, never before, had they been asked this question in my classroom.

The reaction of students makes me realise that they they cannot believe that *I* am asking them this question. I began this way because students told me last year that they teach as I teach them. That is why this year I want to adopt a different strategy. One of my strong educational beliefs is that students must be actively involved in the lesson but in my lectures last year, apparently this was not evident as shown in the photograph [Figure 7.1]. Discussions with students revealed that I never involved students in my lessons and so I am trying this strategy to make them take ownership of the accounting pedagogy curriculum. But students are shocked because, I assume, I role modelled behaviours that moulded students into what they have become—silent recipients of knowledge. (Personal journal, Monday, 10 February 2014)

From the students' reaction, I realised that they were so used to being told what to do in my lectures, they did not know how to respond when I asked this question. I explained to them that I was going to give them freedom to learn. I was not going to focus only on the examinations and formal assessments for marks, but I was going to adopt a very different approach in accounting pedagogy. This seemed to be well received, especially the part about no formal examination. However, a number of students expressed concern. For example, a student asked, "How are we then going to get our marks?" Another student reminded me, "We need a DP (year mark) of 40% to qualify to write the examinations." I explained, "I am well aware of this but there are different ways of assessing performance besides formal tests and examinations." The students wanted to know more but we had run out of time and I told them I would explain at the next lecture.

My accounting lecture the next day, Tuesday, 11 February 2014, was with the accounting, third-year class. I had lectured to them the previous year and introduced them to accounting pedagogy, but our lessons had involved me handing out copious notes and allowing them one oral lesson presentation in the whole year, which ate into our lecture time because there were so many students to present their lessons. Also, because of time constraints, each student had had only 10 minutes to present a lesson, which was insufficient for me to effectively evaluate their teaching. Looking back, I could see that this could have been attributed to my high school teacher belief that the teacher should always respond to the students' needs by providing as much information as possible. I

realised that I had responded to this belief by handing out thick wads of notes (as shown in Chapter Six).

In hindsight, I presume that this practice of allowing a 10-minute lesson presentation time could have contributed to them receiving negative comments from their mentor teachers during teaching practice. They did not have enough practice during micro-teaching sessions to prepare and present lessons. (Personal journal, Tuesday, 11 February 2014)

During the lecture, I explained to the 56 third-year students that, this year, we were going to adopt a different approach. The students appeared very excited because the majority of them had fared poorly in this section in the examinations, which resulted in the decline of their final marks.

Discussing with students for the first time about the struggles they were going through, made me realise that I had taken a lot for granted. I gave them this huge chunk of notes and expected them, in the assessments and examinations, to write logically in grammatically correct English, which is their second language. I am an English-speaking person and I empathise with my students for the first time. I ask myself, what if I was asked to study huge chunks of information in isiZulu and then be given an examination to answer in isiZulu? I am convinced that I would experience the same struggles they are experiencing. I am very cross with myself for not being more understanding of my students' situation. All their other lecturers are black and when students cannot understand in English, the lecturers code switch and explain in isiZulu. I cannot speak IsiZulu at such an advanced level, therefore I am disadvantaging them. At this moment, a notable thought strikes me. I believe in the educational values of student involvement and student-centredness. Nonetheless, it is obvious I was not role modelling these educational values in my teaching because when I tried to involve students in the lesson, they did not respond appropriately because I had not role modelled this kind of involvement for them. It has become very clear to me at this moment that I am experiencing an example of a living contradiction in my pedagogic practice. (Personal journal, Tuesday, 11 February 2014)

The next day, Wednesday, 12 February 2014, was my second lecture with the second-year students. When I walked into the class, the students were very quiet; they were not doing the usual thing of chatting amongst themselves. They seemed very intimidated by me, and they looked at me strangely. That scene has remained in my memory and when I was writing this chapter, I could vividly

remember the scene in the lecture room. I drew a picture of the scene in the room at that moment from memory (see Figure 7.2).

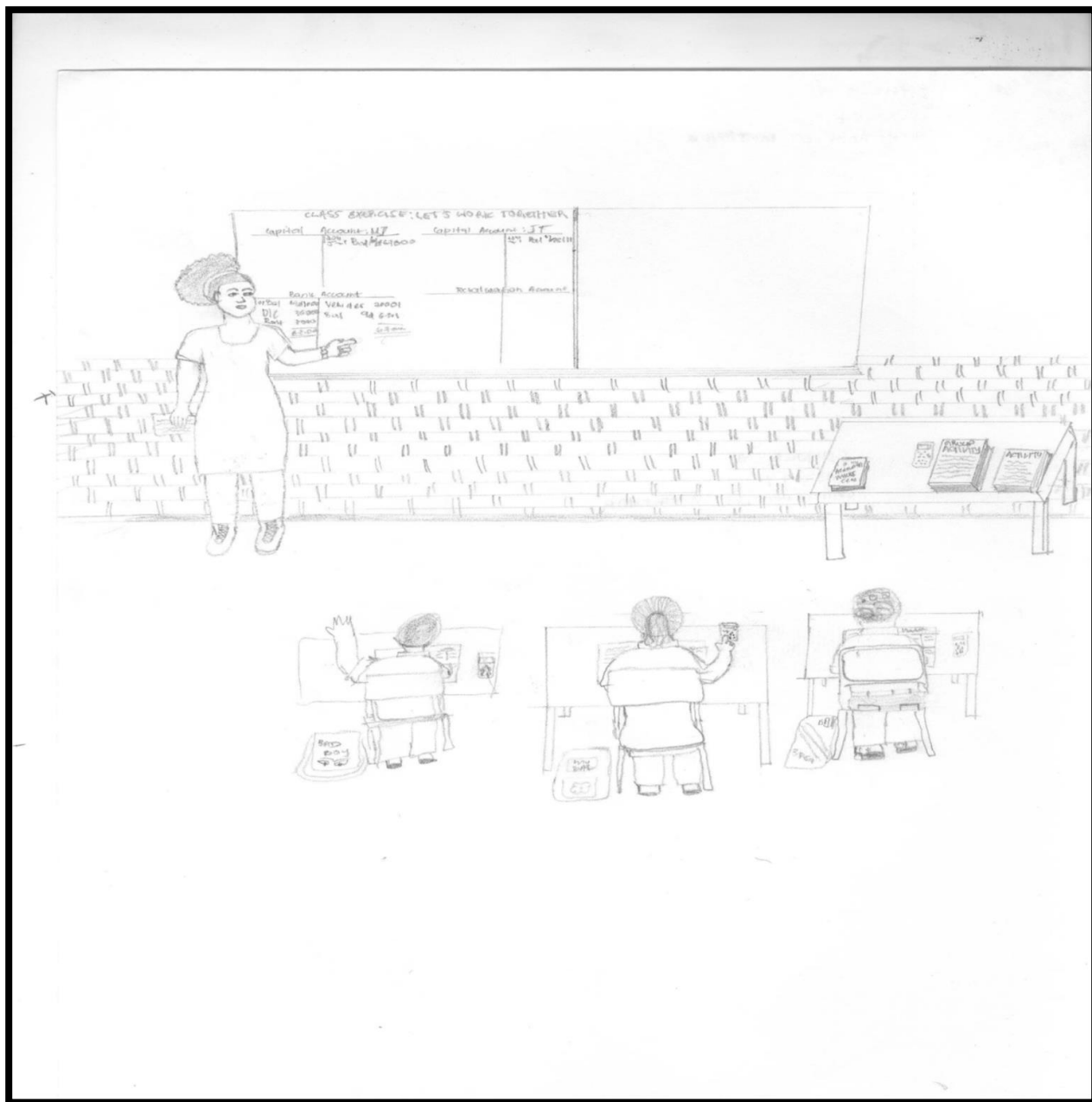


Figure 7.2 A memory drawing of the scene in my lecture room

I do not know whether students are afraid of me or they think I am a fool because I asked them what they want me to teach them. Well, I just have to play it by ear. This is another way I can see what I role model for the students. Asking them to be actively involved in the lecture was something so strange for them that they fear I have lost my mind. (Personal journal, Wednesday, 12 February 2014)

I asked the students what topics they wanted to cover in the accounting pedagogy class, and no one said anything. No answer seemed to be forthcoming and so I suggested lesson planning. I asked them to refer to their lesson plan templates so we could adjust it to suit accounting lessons. When I looked at the lesson plan template I saw that it was a long confusing template, which was about three pages in length. I felt that this was not going to do. I did not discuss anything with the students, but told them I would have a chat with the general pedagogy lecturer, whom I refer to as Dr. C in future discussions.

I am in my office. I think I made a grave error. I should not be asking students about the lesson plan template, but I should have held a discussion with the lecturer concerned. Suddenly a thought has come to my mind—I did not ask the lecturer because I think that I can do everything by myself. It seems like not only do I role model this behaviour for my students but I also do it with my colleagues. I am very reluctant to ask my colleagues anything in any way that will cause them to think less of me. I'd rather make a mistake than ask for help. I think I can trace this behaviour back to my childhood when I felt lost and alone after the death of my father. Added to this was the occurrence when my grandfather labelled me an “ugly duckling” which caused me to believe that I was an ugly duckling and worthless and did not belong. This negative self-concept was further exacerbated by the painful encounters I had with a teacher in primary school who called me a “dirty pig” and made me kneel on the floor. I vowed that when I grew older I would always do my best and make something of myself and that I would never be at anyone's mercy—ever. I always looked down upon myself and harboured a secret resentment against all my more fortunate friends who had things that I wanted but could not have. I promised myself that I would never ask anything of anybody. This pattern has manifested itself in my behaviour of not wanting to discuss anything with anybody that would make me look less in anyway whatsoever and, maybe, this is the reason why I did not discuss the matter of the lesson plan first with the lecturer concerned. (Personal journal, Wednesday, 12 February 2014)

That afternoon, I saw the accounting, third-year cohort of students again. I had only lectured to them for the first six months of 2013 because they had had a replacement lecturer for the rest of the year because I was involved in other academic matters at my institution. I asked them about lesson planning. Then, like a burst pipe, the torrent of complaints came rushing at me. They complained that they were most confused and the lesson plan was too long and took up a lot of their time. Students were in an upheaval and so was I. How could I begin the lecture on lesson planning with

all this confusion? I told them I would discuss the matter with the relevant lecturer and get back to them.

I have a whole two-hour lecture to get through but students are not really enthusiastic nor do they seem interested. I am very disappointed as I had hoped this new approach would instill some excitement in them but all it seems to do is stir up turmoil. I told students that I was going to discuss the matter with the lecturer concerned but, secretly, I am scared to approach the lecturer. She has a reputation for being very straightforward and forthright and, if she believes she is right, there is no changing her mind. I am worried that if she tells me anything negative, it may trigger my deep-seated feelings of self-hate and negativity that I packed away somewhere in the deep recesses of my mind. I have never forgotten those feelings because they come up occasionally when I have a negative experience. I am panicking as I write this in my journal in class. Students are looking at me questioningly. It seems that their stares say, “You’re writing something in a book while we sit here waiting for you.” I have to think on my feet. I have an idea. I will talk about the accounting content and what sections they have covered with the replacement lecturer. (Personal journal, Wednesday, 12 February 2014)

I present the discussion with students in the vignette below.

Vignette: Discussion with third-year accounting pedagogy students on Mr. AK’s teaching style

In the last semester of 2013, the students were taught by a lecturer who replaced me. To protect his identity, I have referred to him as Mr. AK. I engaged students in a discussion about what they had learnt from Mr. AK. The third-year students complained that Mr. AK did not teach as I had taught them. One of the comments was, “He don’t teach us like you teach us, he don’t give us notes, he says we must find out the knowledge ourself then we will not forget what we learn.” Another comment was, “Mam, we so happy you came back to teach us, otherwise we were sure we going to fail.”

Students explained that Mr. AK uploaded information in the online Blackboard classroom and asked them to go through the work and identify areas that they had problems with. In the lecture, he only discussed the problem areas with students and gave them additional accounting exercises for practice. I explained to students that I could not discuss Mr. AK’s teaching style but would take their comments under consideration. After the lecture, I sat down quietly and reflected on the conversation I had with students. I realised that I was actually over teaching the students and that they had found much difficulty adjusting to Mr. AK’s teaching because it seemed that I had role modelled behaviours of giving notes and doing all the work for the students. It appeared that I had never given them freedom to learn.

I was indeed learning because, while reflecting on Mr. AK’s teaching style, I could see the gaps in my teaching style. During my reflective process, I tried to visualise his classroom while he was teaching. I believed that if I could imagine his classroom then, maybe, I could emulate some of his behaviours and teaching styles and learn from him. So, I drew a picture of what I saw in my mind about his classroom (Figure 7.3).

What the drawing told me was that I was actually doing students a disservice by not giving them room to explore and discover new knowledge by themselves. I had all these laudable suggestions and beliefs in my mind, but it was evident from what the students told me that I was putting little of that into action. I wanted to know more about Mr. AK's teaching strategies and his educational beliefs and values so I decided to arrange a meeting with him.



Figure 7.3 Drawing of what I imagined Mr. AK's lecture room to be like

7.3 What children learns from children⁵⁸

This section heading was taken from a conversation between a character in *The Secret Garden*, Susan Sowerby (Dickon's mother), and the housekeeper, Mrs. Medlock. The English is not standard English because Susan Sowerby speaks in a broad Yorkshire dialect, which is sometimes very difficult to understand. What I thought Susan Sowerby meant by "what children learns from children," is that children could learn a lot from each other without actually being aware of it. Although Susan Sotherby was speaking about children, I associated myself with what she was saying. Maybe I could learn from others if I just gave myself a chance and asked them for help. I decided to ask for help and went ahead and met Mr. AK. The discussion that ensued is presented in the vignette below.

⁵⁸ "What children learns from children" (Burnett, 1969, p. 160).

Vignette: Discussion with Mr. AK

When I met with Mr. AK, I explained that I had had a conversation with students, and they had complained that he was not teaching them enough. I told him what they had said about his teaching style and explained I was intrigued by the way he managed his lessons and wanted to know more. I did not want to offend him and so I added that my students were used to my style of teaching and, frankly, I had realised that I still taught as I had as a high school teacher. I further added that I was conscious that my students were exhibiting the kind of pedagogic behaviour I had role modelled for them.

Our conversation was very constructive, during which Mr. AK questioned me about my teaching style. He did not criticise me or find fault with my teaching, but he advised me not to compare myself with anyone else. Instead, he allowed me the freedom to actually take a step out of my teaching context and look at my teaching from an observer perspective, which helped me see the areas that needed improvement in my pedagogic styles. He ended our conversation with this thought-provoking comment:

If you try to do everything for them, they will never assume any responsibility for their learning. Remember, they are going to become teachers and teachers are life-long learners. If they do not acquire the mind-set now to learn for themselves, they will experience problems later in their careers as teachers.

I had made the appointment with Mr. AK because I wanted to learn from him and, in the process, he became one of my critical friends because he asked me certain probing questions about my teaching practice that made me see myself in relation to my practice from a different perspective (Samaras, 2011). After this conversation with Mr. AK, I returned to my office and transcribed the discussion from the notes I had made during the conversation. After transcribing the discussion I recorded my reflections about the conversation in my reflective journal.

What shall I do? Where do I start? Mr. AK did say it is going to be a gradual process and he is a calm, collected person and has many years of experience. He has been the voice of reason and wisdom for me in this discussion. What he said is true—I have to do this by myself. I am determined to bring about change and I am going to read more on student-centredness. (Personal journal, Wednesday, 12 February 2014)

Lea, Stephenson, and Troy (2003, p. 2) advocated that, “as opposed to a teacher-centred pedagogical model which focuses on what the student is and a one-way transmission of knowledge, a student-centred approach focuses on what the student does and how they construct their own understandings and new knowledge.” When I read this explanation of student-centred learning, I was delighted because I had seen this in action in what the students told me about Mr. AK’s teaching. I also came to know that student-centred learning places the responsibility of learning with the students (Jones, 2007).

On further exploration of relevant scholarly literature, I found that ideas on student-centred learning date back to theorists such as American philosopher and psychologist, John Dewey (1963), Swiss

psychologist Jean Piaget (1936), Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1978), and American psychologist Carl Rogers (1983), whose theories collectively focused on how students learn (all as cited in Attard, Di Lorio, Geven, & Santa, 2010). These scholars proposed that learning takes place when students formulate their own knowledge by being very much a part of the learning process while the teacher or lecturer acts as a guide by helping students to gather, analyse, and synthesise the information. Student-centred learning is broadly based on the constructivist theory of learning, which is established on the assumption that students must “construct and reconstruct knowledge” (2010, p. 2) in order for them to learn meaningfully (Attard, et al., 2010). Semple (2000) also agreed that student-centred learning is entrenched in social constructivist learning theories because the learners make meaning from their own personal experiences in their social contexts. In a constructivist student-centred learning environment, the student is motivated to explore concepts in more depth than just taking the lecturer’s viewpoint of a topic (Zain, 2012).

Seng (2014) found that a shift in the thinking about student-centred learning approaches had taken place, resulting in students being positioned as the main participant in the learning process. By placing students as the central object in the learning process, the students get a voice in the decision making of choosing what direction their learning experiences will take (McCarthy, 2015).

Having read the literature on student-centred learning, I realise that I was not exhibiting student-centred learning in my teaching activities. I thought that I was but it seems I was not—but why? I never thought about it like this before and this thought arose so suddenly that the truth of it shakes me. In my primary school years, I was always the underdog but I never realised it impacted on me so strongly as I did at this very moment. Now as an adult, I want everyone to think I am clever and know more than others because I do not want to be the underdog. I want to be at the forefront of everything and I realise that is why I do not ask my students questions. In my mind, their answers will always be inferior because I believe that I am the expert. This is a very revealing admission because it comes from the secret place in my mind where I store all my secret thoughts and feelings. I have been role modelling this behaviour for my students and creating the illusion that there is no better accounting teacher educator than me. But do I really want my students to turn into pompous future teachers, thinking they are perfect and there is no way they can learn anything from anyone? (Personal journal, Wednesday, 12 February 2014)

Because I had promised the third-year cohort of students I would have a discussion with the general pedagogy lecturer about the lesson plan template, I arranged a meeting with her. I dreaded this meeting because I did not like to ask anybody for anything, but I had no alternative. As it turned out, the dialogue I had with general pedagogy lecturer was totally different to what I had envisaged. I was initially scared to ask her if I could audiotape the discussion because at that stage I was not sure of how she would respond. I asked her if I could take notes while we spoke and if I could use excerpts from the discussion as data for my study. I reassured her that I would not use her real name. She agreed to this.

During the discussion, her response so shocked me that I was speechless for a moment. She said,

You don't know how long I have been waiting for someone to discuss the lesson plan with. I developed this lesson plan on my own and no one put an objection to it and I assumed it was right. Students did complain but you know they just go along with it. I am so happy that you have brought this matter up. (Personal communication, Thursday, 13 February 2014)

Armed with this delightful response from my colleague I immediately went to my office and made an entry in my reflective journal about the meeting.

I am so relieved. As I am sitting at my table I think about the tensions I experienced in my teaching career about asking other people for help. I assumed that everyone would be condescending and make me feel inferior. This was not the case, however, with the two colleagues I interacted with today. In fact, they were nothing but kind, helpful, and friendly. I do not say my feelings of insecurity have gone or I am totally cured of being seen as lesser if I ask for help, but from my two positive experiences at least I made a good start. I went into the discussions with trepidation of being ridiculed or being treated like I was inferior, but came out with a sense of belonging and being part of a group. For me this is huge. I am learning. (Personal journal, Thursday, 13 February 2014).

7.4 Open the Window⁵⁹

I chose the heading of "Open the Window" because, in this section, I reveal how I opened myself to new ideas and challenges as I came to know that I was not practising student-centred teaching.

⁵⁹ "Open the window" (Burnett, 1969, p. 162).

I believe that if I open myself to other possibilities and model this behaviour, maybe my students will soon begin modelling these behaviours for their learners. Students are so anchored in my role modelling that it is going to take a while to dislodge them from this type of mind-set. I believe that I hold the key that is going to turn their mind-sets and I can do this by role modelling student-centred behaviours in my teaching. (Personal journal, Thursday, 13 February 2014)

Because my other lectures were concentrated on pure accounting content, my next accounting pedagogy lecture was scheduled for Monday, 17 February 2014. Thus, I had the weekend to plan the next accounting pedagogy lecture. I decided to place lesson planning on hold until the discussions had taken place to revise the lesson plan template. In the interim, I decided to look at the prescribed curriculum document I had designed for accounting pedagogy in 2008. When I initially designed the document, I was at a loss as to what the prescribed accounting pedagogy curriculum should comprise of. The following list of sections I included was based on the understandings I had at that time about what should constitute an accounting pedagogy curriculum:

- Aims, objectives and outcomes in accounting
- Teaching and learning strategies in accounting
- Lesson planning
- Methods and media for teaching accounting
- Assessment and evaluation in accounting
- Classroom practice for accounting.

As I look at this curriculum now, it seems too theoretical, lifeless, and boring. I feel guilty about what I put my students through, wading through huge piles of notes and trying to make sense of all this and then, adjust what they learned theoretically to the practical situation in the classroom. No, I am not doing this to my students again. No wonder they are performing so poorly. I have myself to blame partly for this. (Personal journal, Friday, 14 February 2014)

As I sat and pondered on how I could change this situation, I decided to look for ideas on the Internet and I stumbled across an open education resource (Nicholson, 2014). Open Education Resource (OER) sites are freely accessible, openly licensed sites where teaching and learning materials are freely available online for everyone to use (Downs, 2008).

I got extremely encouraged when I learned what this site had to offer. Because it was an OER site, the teaching resources were openly and freely available to the public, and included textbooks, videos, audiotapes, and DVDs as well as other teaching support materials used to expand knowledge. I spent the weekend watching the videos and DVDs, and listening to the audiotapes. On Sunday, 16 February 2014, I decided to settle, as a start, on five DVDs and five videos. I uploaded the five DVDs and five videos in the institution's learning management system Blackboard⁶⁰ classroom for students to watch.

On Monday, 17 February 2014, I was very enthusiastic when I got to my lecture venue to have a lesson with the third-year students. As I accessed the online classroom, the students laughed when they saw the video was on teaching and learning instead of a fictional film. When the video was over, I paused for a while and then questioned the students. I then showed them a DVD. After watching the DVD, I questioned them about the DVD. On Tuesday, 18 February 2014, I prepared my lecture venue to show the same videos and DVDs to the second-year students. After they watched the video and DVD, I asked them questions as well. Both second- and third-year students' responses to the video and DVD are represented by the vignette below:

⁶⁰ Blackboard is a virtual learning management system (LMS) and a course management system that allows teachers or teacher educators to post announcements, upload course material, send e-mails to students, and create online discussion forums (Cornell Academic Technologies, 2014).

Vignette: Discussion with second- and third-year students about the video and DVD

After watching the video and DVD, which were based on teaching media and teaching resources, third-year students said that there was a lot of information on both the video and the DVD. The usual question was asked about whether I was going to test them about this in the examinations. Students also commented that this was better than trying to write notes while I was lecturing and getting through all the notes I usually give them. Many students stated that they wished the lecturer for general pedagogy could also show them videos and DVDs because then they would be able to see what the lecturer was talking about. She would not have to explain so much. One student commented, “I never thought you could use the textbook in a lesson without it becoming boring.”

Second-year students, after watching the video and DVD, questioned me on whether there was a difference between teaching media and teaching resources. I explained that these terms are sometimes used interchangeably. Thereafter, I explained what interchangeably meant. I told the second-year students that I would leave it to them to do some research on teaching media and teaching resources. Students were not too pleased about this and one student commented, “No, I do not like this teaching style because you want us to do all the work. You did not give us any notes but last year you gave the second-year students lots of notes. Mam, you doing what Mr. AK was doing.”

I asked third-year students whether it was a good way to learn about teaching media and teaching resources. When students responded positively, I asked them how they felt about exploring teaching media and teaching resources as a topic in the accounting pedagogy curriculum. Students wanted me to clarify what I meant by exploring. I explained that they would discuss the merits and limitations of using teaching different media and teaching resources, and they would try to experiment with different ways in which they can use them in their classroom.

Although third-year students said it was a much better approach than me handing out notes, they, together with the second-year students, were not very comfortable with the idea of working by themselves and asked if I would help them. I clarified that whilst I would provide the guidelines, I not going to do the work for them. I explained it was in their best interest to watch the other videos and DVDs that I had uploaded into the Blackboard classroom because we were going to have class discussions and debates about the content.

When I mentioned debates, the students were shocked because we had never had a debate in an accounting class before. I softened the blow—that they had to do the work by themselves—by motivating them with the possibility of a debate.

I feel good about the lectures I had with second- and third-year students. The decision I made about compiling the curriculum as we are going along may just work. I am not sure, because it is too soon, but I have a good feeling about it. I will see the second-year students tomorrow then I will be able to say something more substantive. I am just happy for now that today went off so well. (Personal journal, Monday, 17 February 2014)

The second-year cohort of students are very different from the third-year cohort. I presume, by the time they come to third year, they too will have matured. I am not making the same

mistake I made last year by spoon-feeding the students and handing out copious notes. This year they are going to take responsibility for their own learning. I knew the second-year students were going to pose a problem but I am going to help them change their mind-set that everything is for marks. They must move away from the thought that they only learn to write examinations. Once the examinations are done, then all learning stops until the next examination. It is going to be tough changing this attitude but I am going to try. (Personal journal, Tuesday, 18 February 2014)

Over the next four weeks, I implemented this strategy of getting students to watch videos and DVDs in our online Blackboard classroom and, when they came to class, we discussed the content and debated the merits and limitations of putting these into practice. Students were getting used to the idea of making their own notes and even the second-year students seemed to be changing their attitudes slowly.

After the third-year students had watched all the videos and DVDs, I told them we were going to have an activity in class for which they would be assessed. We were going to have a debate on the benefits and limitations of using the textbook as a teaching resource. I chose debate as a teaching strategy because I had seen it described as a social constructivist teaching strategy. For instance, Bonwell and Eison (1991) maintained that more effective learning amongst students takes place when students get involved in the lesson as compared to them sitting quietly and listening to the teacher. By taking part in the lessons, students take an interest in arguing for a particular topic that they feel strongly about and learn, in this way, to take responsibility for their own learning (Berdine, 1987).

According to Budesheim and Lundquist (2000), when using debates for teaching, students get to see both sides of an argument. In this way, it promotes their critical thinking skills and allows them to bring quality arguments to the debate because they undertake research to get information that is factual. Budesheim and Lundquist added further that, during a debate, students might become emotional but they learn that the context in which they are arguing a topic is really independent of their personal feelings. This promotes their ability to think rationally—especially when arguing for a topic that challenges their initial assumptions. In this way too, students learn to control their emotions and focus on the positive and negative aspects of the topic of the debate.

Personally, I felt that debates would help my students relate their course material to actual events that occur in real life and help them understand that, while their opinions are important, their personal feelings about a topic can cloud the facts about that topic. This information makes students realise that debates are not about verbally attacking another person but, rather, gaining a deeper understanding about a topic and using the knowledge acquired in other courses. I agree with Cronin and Glenn (1991) who explained that during a debate, students take the important aspects of their course material and provide alternate perspectives of viewing this material—as well as making sound positive and negative arguments about the course material—which are not only understood by their lecturers but also understood by their peers. This helps the peers develop a better understanding of the course material because it is discussed by someone on the same level as them.

From my reading, I also came to know that classroom interactions during debates between students are considered “to be more effective than traditional teaching strategies. This form of interaction is underpinned by values of collaboration, and the construction of individual and collective knowledge” (Bartlett & Ferber, as cited in Brownson, 2013, p. 78). Research (for example, Dundes, 2001) “supports the use of debates in the classroom since it requires not only active engagement by students, investing them with the responsibility to investigate, articulate and defend a particular issue” (p. 237) and debates also entice students who do not normally speak in a lesson, to get involved in the class activities. However, more importantly, the opportunity that debates provide students is to get more than just the superficial knowledge about a topic. It transcends students’ thinking to advanced levels (Vygotsky, 1978). Elliot (1993) emphasised that debaters must also critically evaluate the knowledge they acquire during the debate in order to make informed decisions and debate a point effectively. It was interesting for me to learn debates have been known to help students improve their speech, language, and listening skills, which enables them to make effective retorts when debating (Carini, Kuh, & Klein, 2006). Whilst debates can create competitiveness in the classroom, Walker and Warhurst (2000) pointed out that debates offer a good opportunity for students to develop empathic skills that would stand them in good stead as future teachers for understanding learners’ circumstances.

The various sources I consulted on debates placed me in a better position to plan the debate for my students. I wanted one half of the students to be arguing for the benefit of using the textbook as an example of teaching media, and the other half to be against the use of textbooks by debating on the limitations. I explained to the third-year students that I was going to be a spectator for the entire debate and would not contribute anything.

On Monday morning, 11 March 2014 at 10 o'clock, the debate took place. At the time of the debate I was much too occupied to draw or write anything. However, when I wrote this chapter, I created a memory drawing of the debate (Figure 7.4). In the drawing, I portrayed the student who chaired the debate standing in front of the audience. Sitting in the back seats of the sports centre were the academic and administrative staff. In the bottom rows, were seated the two groups of students who were taking part in the debate. The chairperson was reading the rules of the debate and announcing the topic of the debate. Everyone in the audience was listening attentively. I remember that, although they were many people present, the room was silent because no one had held a debate in such a long time that it was a novelty for everyone.

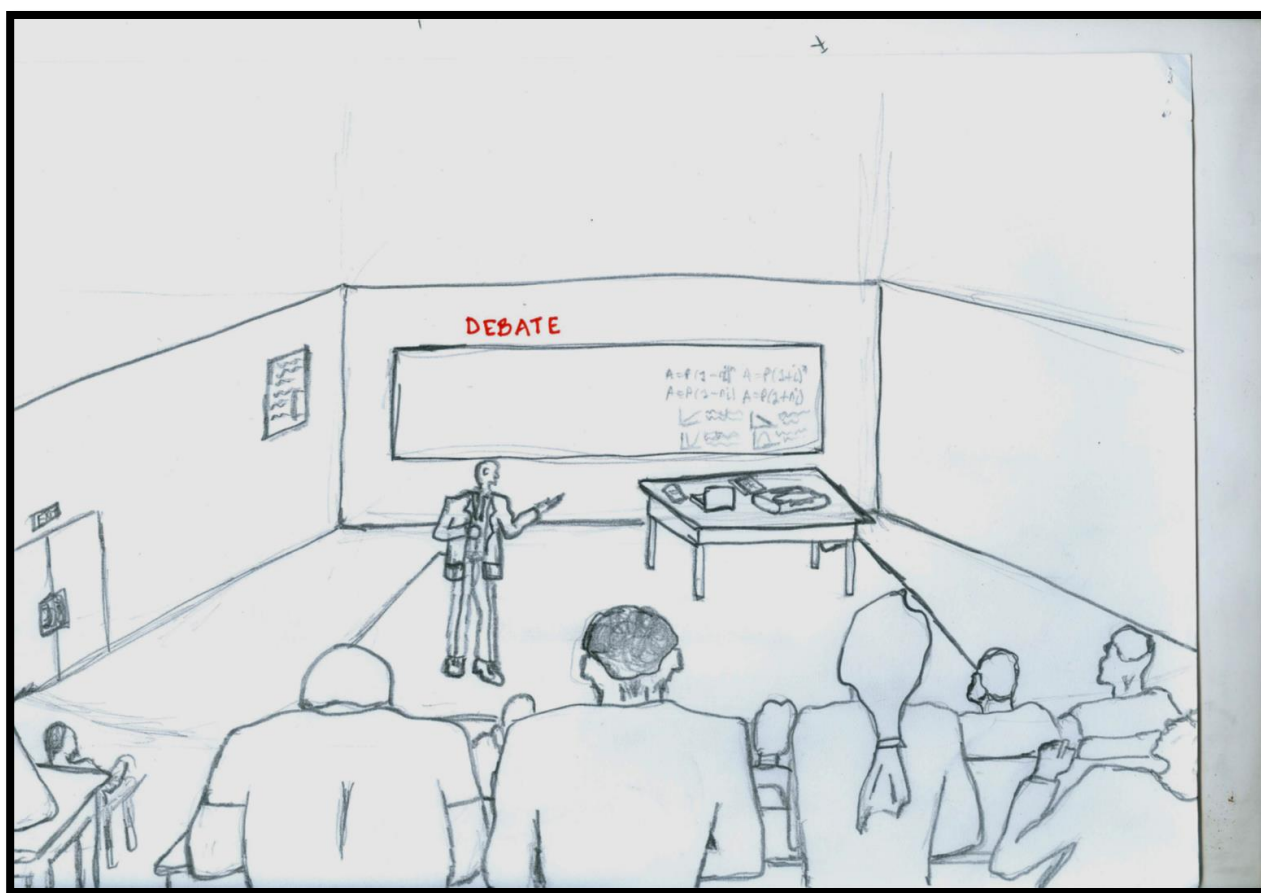


Figure 7.4 A memory drawing of the debate

Everything was handled with professionalism and decorum and the debate proceeded perfectly. When I heard students' arguments for and against the use of the textbook as a teaching resource, it warmed my heart to note that they had done much more research on this topic than just watching the videos and DVDs.

Figure 7.5 is the rubric I adapted from International Reading Association (2005) to assess students' performance in the debate. I completed and uploaded this in the Blackboard online classroom with their results.

	3	2	1
Viewpoints are clear and organised	Viewpoints are clear and organised.	Most viewpoints are clear.	Viewpoints are unclear and disorganised.
Arguments supported by factual evidence	Arguments are supported with facts and examples.	Most arguments are supported with facts and examples.	Arguments lack factual support.
Relevancy of supporting arguments	All supporting arguments are relevant.	Many, but not all, supporting arguments are relevant.	Few supporting arguments are relevant.
Strength of arguments	All arguments are strong and convincing.	Some arguments are convincing.	Arguments are not convincing.
Presentation skills	Voice can always be heard.	Voice is heard most of the time.	Voice is difficult to hear.
Preparation	Student is well prepared.	Student needs more preparation.	Student is unprepared to defend argument.

Figure 7.5 Rubric used to assess the debate (Adapted from International Reading Association)

When I met with the second-year students on Tuesday, 12 March 2014, they claimed that I was unfair not to let them have a debate. I told them they were also going to focus on teaching media and teaching resources but they were going to take the content they had seen on the videos and DVDs and create some form of song, dance, play, or anything else that took their fancy.

In my attempt to engage in learning and teaching beyond the usual classroom experience, I experimented with innovative pedagogies that were in the realm of arts-based approaches. I had done some research on the use of arts-based pedagogic approaches and discovered that the arts have been part of general teacher education since Dewey and the beginning of the progressive education movement (Oreck, 2004). I was interested to learn that Dewey (as cited in Leddy, 2016) claimed that the experience of using art was more significant than creating an artistic product. I also understood that using arts-based experiences in education involved free and unrestricted exploration and roused individual creative thinking instead of preempted goals and correct or incorrect answers (Eisner, 1994; Gardner, 1973).

Dewey (1934) suggested that integrating aspects of the arts into the curriculum was not only focused on creating an arts project in class, but also used to make links with actual everyday life experiences and, thus, create meaningful learning environments for the students. When students create songs, dance, pictures, or other nonverbal expressions of the learning content, they engage with the information. I realised that teachers do not need to be artistically inclined to incorporate arts in their curricula—they just have to think of innovative ways of merging the learning content with the arts. An and Tillman (2014) found that, often, the students who benefitted the most from arts-based teaching were the students who experienced difficulties with academics; they also found that using an arts-based approach to teaching raised students' interest and motivation levels and improved students' understanding. Furthermore, Pithouse-Morgan et al. (2013) articulated how they used creative and participatory strategies in incorporating HIV and AIDS into teacher education programmes. They participated in producing “participatory videos, photo-messages, drawings or pieces of autobiographical writing” (2013, p. 85). These creative strategies led teachers and student teachers to rethink the impact of HIV and AIDS on their private and their work lives, which they may have forgotten or deliberately overlooked. The process enhanced personal deliberations, engagement with, and self-analysis about, HIV and AIDS.

After reading scholarly literature on incorporating aspects of the arts into education, I was looking forward to see what students would come up with. The day of the students' show finally arrived on Monday, 24 March 2014. When I got to the sports centre at lunchtime, staff and students were patiently waiting for the show. Even the cleaning staff had attended. The photograph (Figure 7.6) shows the packed sports centre before the show.



Figure 7.6 Photograph of the sports centre before the show

I had asked the information technology technician to take photographs for me because he was very good with the camera on a cell phone. The students had set up a makeshift stage for their acts. Figure 7.7 shows the makeshift stage the students set up.



Figure 7.7 A photograph of the makeshift stage

The students dressed up for the occasion in traditional Zulu clothing. One group performed a mock traditional Zulu wedding with the bridegroom's family and the bride's family challenging each other to a duel, which is a tradition of Zulu weddings. Instead of them shouting insults at each other as tradition calls for, they shouted information on teaching resources and teaching aids. While it was hilarious, it was very innovative and original. The Zulu priest who performed the mock wedding also spoke about teaching resources and teaching aids. The staff were in stitches of laughter. Everybody had a good time and thoroughly enjoyed the mock wedding. Below, is a photograph (Figure 7.8) of the mock Zulu wedding.



Figure 7.8 The mock Zulu wedding

The next act was based on a play that students performed about a teacher using teaching resources and teaching media incorrectly. The learners in her classroom had to correct her, and the students made it really funny with the teacher acting like a batty old woman and falling over her feet and talking nonsense. The students really enjoyed this funny play but they also seemed to have received valuable information on teaching resources and teaching media. Figure 7.9 is a photograph of this sketch.



Figure 7.9 A photograph of a sketch of learners correcting the teacher

The next act was based on a game show where students were asked questions about teaching aids and teaching resources and, if they could not answer a question, they were given a chance to ask the audience for help. If they knew the answer they got points and, at the end of the show, the person with the highest points got a prize. The following show was a traditional Indian dance performed by a group of black students. The lyrics in the song were made up of words from the information on teaching aids and teaching resources.

It was finally time for the last act of the day and I anticipated that students had planned something exciting because I could sense the excitement in the sports centre. Suddenly, from the back of the hall, a group of students appeared—carrying a drum. They were rapping and dancing to a song they had made up from content comprising teaching resources and teaching media. They danced and rapped through the hall and, before long, all the other students were up and dancing and singing about teaching resources and teaching media. It was the most delightful display of academic rap. Figure 7.10 is a photograph of the students doing the academic rap, still dressed in their traditional Zulu attire.



Figure 7.10 A photograph of the academic rap

Figure 7.11 is a copy of the rubric adapted from International Reading Association (2015) and used to assess these students. I found it difficult to assess every student individually when they performed in a group, so I gave every student in a group the same mark—they were group-assessed.

Role-Play Rubric					
Name: _____			Date: _____		
Student No: _____			Role played: _____		
CRITERIA	RATING				
	5	4	3	2	1
PRESENTATION SKILLS					
ROLE PLAYED WAS RELEVANT					
CONTENT FIT THE ROLE					
COSTUMES AND PROPS WERE APPROPRIATE					
ROLE PLAY WAS WELL PREPARED					
ROLE PLAY CAPTURED AUDIENCE ATTENTION					
Additional Criteria: _____ _____ _____ _____ Comments: _____ _____ Total: _____					

Figure 7.11: Rubric to assess role play (Adapted from International Reading Association)

I used the same rubric to assess the students in all the performances and uploaded the results to the Blackboard online classroom.

I am very impressed with myself and with my students. I am impressed with myself for having thought about giving activities that allowed them the freedom to learn, and impressed with them for taking part so actively and planning and executing such delightful activities. When I chatted with students, they told me accounting lectures are no longer the boring, routine lectures where you just work all the time from the beginning of the lecture till the end of the lecture. They now look forward to the accounting pedagogy lectures because, every week, I am coming up with some exciting activity for them to do. After hearing this, I believe that my role modelling has evolved. My role modelling is sending a message to students that learning

can also be fun, provided it is in a controlled environment. Students said they cannot wait to go on teaching practice to try this out with their learners at school. (Personal journal, Tuesday, 25 March 2014)

When I asked the second-year students what they thought about me changing teaching strategies, they told me that they had learnt a lot about teaching media and teaching resources from the show. They stated that they would never forget it because all they had to do was think about the show and they would remember. Students also commented that I had also changed because I was more relaxed and flexible in my teaching approach. One student said,

I can't wait for the next activity, please plan something nice for us. I look forward to accounting pedagogy now, before, I hated it, I was failing. Ask me anything now on teaching resources and teaching media, I will rap it for you, that song is still in my head. I taped it on my phone to learn for the test if you give us a test.

As I listened to the students, I took a step out of myself and looked at myself clearly. Indeed, I have undergone some kind of change. At this moment, I cannot pinpoint exactly what it is but I have a sense of relief. Maybe the reason for the relief will come later. It feels like a weight has been lifted off my shoulders. I see my students in a new light. The relationship is different with me. I now feel elated because I feel I belong to that circle and I am one of the family. (Personal journal, Wednesday, 26 March 2014)

7.5 Golden Trumpets⁶¹

I gave this section the heading, “Golden Trumpets,” because I felt at that time that golden trumpets were saluting me for beginning to re-envision myself and my role modelling. I wanted to keep this momentum going and so, on Monday, 31 March 2014, I engaged third-year students in a metaphor drawing activity. In order for them to gain a better understanding of themselves as teachers, I asked them to get into groups and choose a metaphor that best described themselves working in the classroom as teachers. Once they had drawn the metaphors on a sheet of paper, they had to write an explanation on why they chose the metaphor.

⁶¹ “Golden Trumpets” (Burnett, 1969, p. 162).

My reason for giving students the metaphor exercise was that I read Nevgi and Löfström's (2013) ideas on how students' metaphor drawings and students' verbal metaphors correlate with each other and transpire from their self-images as teachers. I anticipated that using metaphor drawings and verbal metaphors together would help students produce a more enhanced view of their teacher identities. Nikitina and Furuoka (as cited in van Laren, 2014) informed me that there were a number of studies in "education and pedagogy" (p. 23) that used metaphors in the research design. Van Laren (2011) described how students expressed their personal thoughts and real experiences in their metaphor drawings.

I explained to students, after they had drawn a metaphor of themselves as teachers in the classroom, they had to work in groups and find a metaphor that best described me as their teacher educator. They had to draw this metaphor and provide an explanation of why they chose that particular metaphor to represent me. My intention when asking students to work in a group and develop their metaphors was to foster social constructivist learning. While working together, they shared ideas and developed ideas about which metaphor to draw based on their collective background knowledge and experience. I anticipated that by bringing together their collective experiences and knowledge, students would be involved in social constructivist learning (Iannarelli & Piotrowski, 2013). Later that evening I read the students' explanations and looked at their drawings. Some of these metaphor drawings really caught my attention. Students did a metaphor drawing (Figure 7.12) depicting me as a bright red Ferrari. They also did a metaphor drawing of me as a jacaranda tree (Figure 7.13). Another group of students described me as an aeroplane and although they did not draw it, they wrote an explanation of why they depicted me as an aeroplane (Figure 7.14).



We see Mrs H as this Ferrari because she is very powerful in her teaching. She know her work well but she goes very fast like the car. She write on the board and then take it off very fast. We do not get a chance to ask questions. We do not make link with her because she hurry. We will never afford to buy a ferrari, we feel we cannot to be on the same height as Mrs H. She too high for us. She need to slow down

Figure 7.12 The Ferrari metaphor drawing

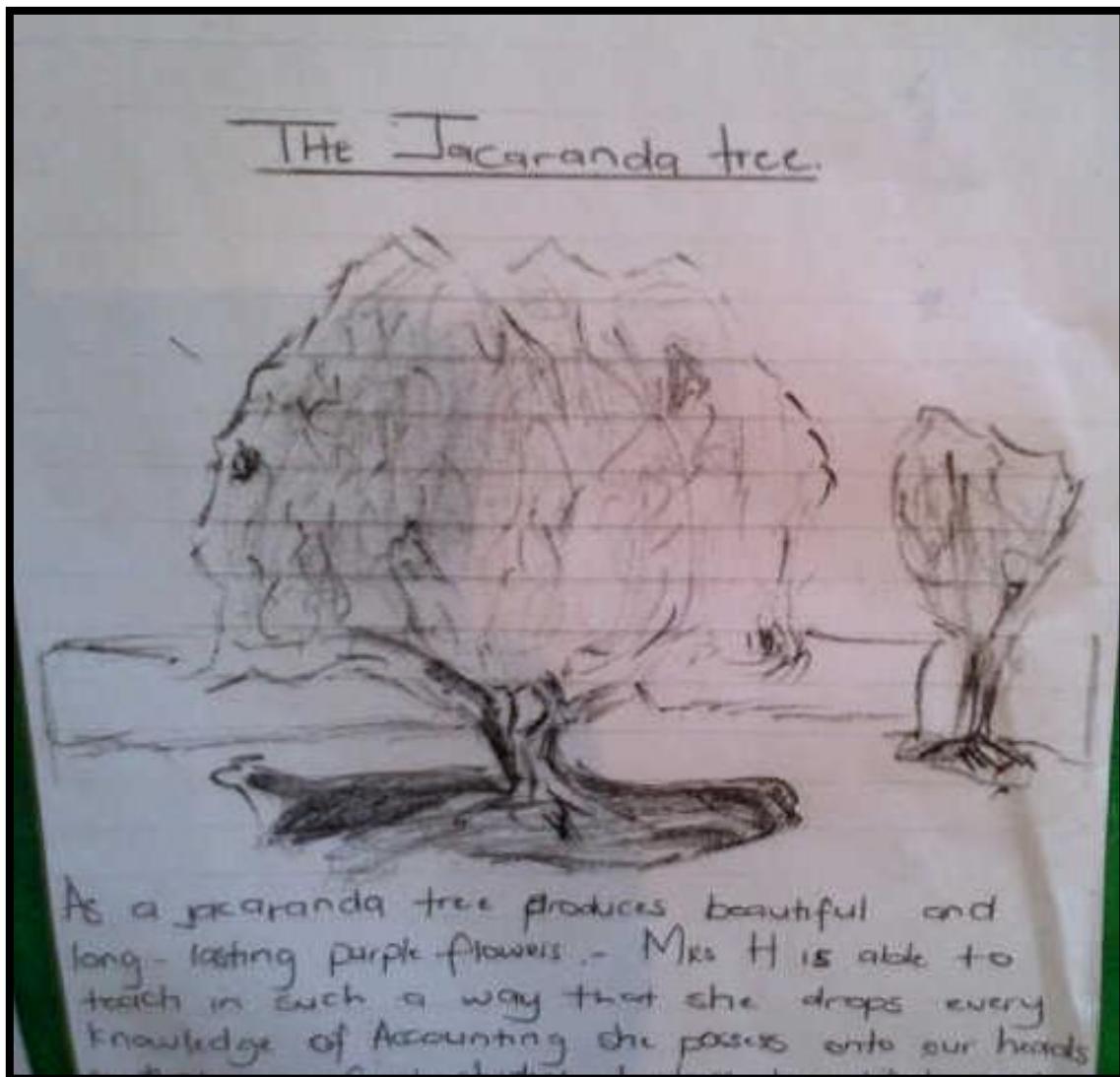


Figure 7.13 Metaphor drawing of me as a jacaranda tree

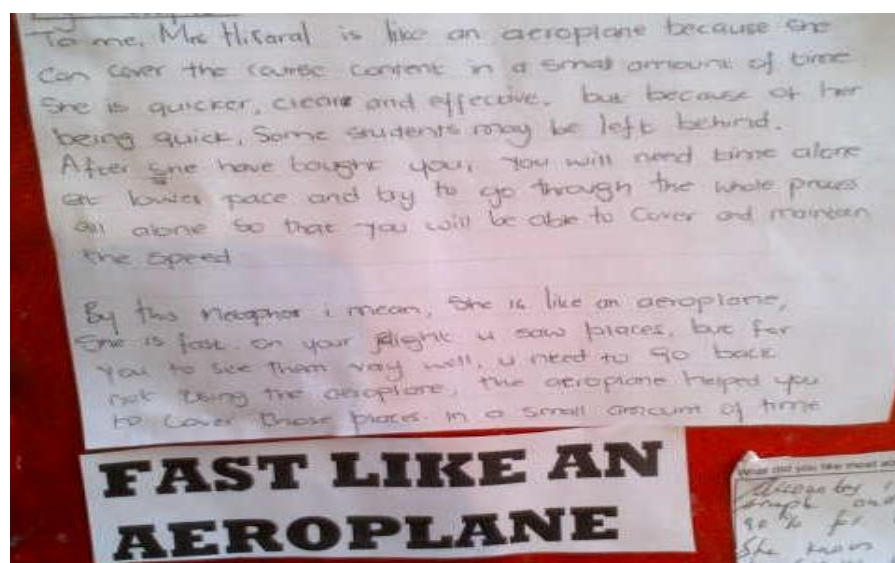


Figure 7.14 Metaphor description of me as an aeroplane

My discussion with students on their metaphor drawings is portrayed in the vignette below.

Vignette: Discussion with students on metaphor drawing activity

I was very pleased, initially, that the students had chosen this metaphor of the Ferrari but, as I read their explanations, I became aware that some of my teaching styles and characteristics needed further reflection. A theme that emerged from this metaphor drawing, firstly, was “powerful.” Students had said, “We see Mrs. Hiralaal as this Ferrari because she is very powerful in her teaching.” They said that they could see I was very knowledgeable with regard to my subject content. When I asked how they related this to the Ferrari, they informed me that when you start up a Ferrari, immediately you can hear the engine has power and it will be fast. Likewise, when I began teaching, they could relax immediately and not worry because they knew that at the end of the lecture they would know so much more than they did previously. In the same vein, students also said that I am very fast—when I teach, I move at a very fast pace and sometimes they do not get a chance to absorb the content. I also seldom ask questions and when I do ask a question, I do not wait for answers but answer my own questions.

Some students described me as a jacaranda tree. They said this was because they felt that I am a very tough and strong teacher who can handle every situation in and outside the classroom just like a jacaranda tree that is able to handle a variety of soils and growing conditions. They claimed that because of this, “every single student develops a beautiful and long-lasting knowledge of accounting, as well as becomes a strong teacher.”

One group of students referred to me as an aeroplane although they did not draw the aeroplane but merely wrote an explanation [Figure 7.14]. They felt I was like an aeroplane because I am able to cover a lot of content in a short space of time. But they also felt that, sometimes, students get left behind because, whilst I am teaching, they do not grasp the content and need to take time out later by themselves and slowly work through what I am teaching.

I questioned students further on the metaphor activity as a teaching strategy. One student responded, “Mam, I liked this activity very much because I like to draw,” while another student responded quite differently: “I did not like it because I can’t draw, I did not do a metaphor drawing, I put in a copy of a picture from the Internet.” So, students had mixed feeling about the metaphor drawing activity.

I responded to students with this comment,

Like you, I was scared to draw. I had this fear that I was not creative. I would also download pictures from the Internet. But you know what, when I actually started drawing, I lost my fear because it was my picture, it was telling my story so if I wanted it to be upside down, so be it. The more unprofessional your drawing, the more original and authentic it is. Because then, your focus is not on the quality of the drawing but on the message the drawing is trying to send to you and to others. When you go for teaching practice next, try out some of these strategies in school and come back and tell me if they were effective or not.

7.6 It’s Planted⁶²

Colin is exceptionally pleased that he has planted his first tree before sunset because it signifies a momentous event in his life. He has stood up by himself. The planting of the tree is very significant to Colin because it is the start of a new phase in his life. I also felt that the events recounted in this

⁶² “‘It’s planted,’ said Colin, at last” (Burnett, 1969, p. 189).

chapter were the start of a new phase in my role modelling. I began trying to enact my pedagogies from a social constructivist approach and the idea was now planted. It was the beginning of my “reinventing” (Mitchell & Weber, 1999, p. 231).

In this chapter, I gave a narrative account of my accounting pedagogy lectures with second- and third-year accounting education students for the first trimester of 2014. This pedagogic narrative shows how I learned, by conducting this exploration into my teaching practice, that there was definitely a living contradiction in my educational practices. Although I wanted students to construct their own knowledge through exploring, experimentation, and building on their existing knowledge, I had not been role modelling this social constructivist approach in my pedagogic practice.

I began this chapter with a heading “It Has Come” to signify the coming of springtime to the moors. I also developed a poem that related to the coming of spring and opening windows to let in the sounds of spring. I related this to the coming of my springtime when I opened myself to different social constructivist teaching approaches. I do feel that trumpets must blow for me because I have learned that, by putting a social constructivist approach into practice in my pedagogic practice as a teacher educator of accounting pedagogy, I opened myself to involving my students actively in the learning process. I gave students more freedom to learn by allowing them the opportunity to plan and execute their own approaches to learning the content in accounting pedagogy—for example, the debates, the show, and the metaphor drawing activity. Apart from students learning the content in a meaningful way, they enjoyed the learning process. Students commented that I also began transforming and was no longer so rigid in my teaching approach. I was more relaxed and this projected onto them because they were learning in a relaxed and enjoyable way.

In the next chapter, I describe my teaching activities for the second trimester of 2014. I show how I used oral storytelling as a teaching strategy. I also demonstrate how my students responded to my attempts to introduce a student-centred environment in my classroom. I explain how I involved students in peer teaching and a debate. I conclude the chapter with a description of second and third-year students’ experiences in teaching lessons to the first-year students.

CHAPTER EIGHT: THINGS ARE CHANGING⁶³

Things

In this

House cannot

Well change for the

Worse⁶⁴

8.1 It Is Changing for the Better⁶⁵

The words “Things Are Changing” are taken from *The Secret Garden*. The gardener says this to the housekeeper, Mrs. Medlock when he comes to the house, having been summoned by Colin. Mrs. Medlock informs the gardener that things are changing in the house since Mary has arrived. Colin is no longer having so many tantrums and he seems happy. I can compare this change in Colin to the transformation I was going through. Just as the housekeeper states, “things are changing” so too, things were also changing for me.

I commenced this chapter with a lantern poem composed from words I extracted from *The Secret Garden*. A lantern poem is a Japanese type of poem very similar to a haiku poem. It is short and a limited number of syllables are used in each line. The first line has one syllable, the second line has two syllables, the third line comprises three syllables, the fourth line has four syllables. The fifth line has one syllable and the word chosen must be related to the word in the first line. (Cleary, 2014). A lantern turns darkness into light bringing with it new hope. By using the short impactful and the expressive style of a lantern poem, I wanted to throw light on my role modelling as work in progress.

In Chapter Seven, I presented a pedagogic narrative of my day-to-day teaching activities from the first day of the academic year, 3 February 2014 till the end of the first trimester, 28 March 2014. I fashioned the fictional life experiences of Mary and Colin, two of the characters in *The Secret Garden* against my own lived experiences. Just as things were changing in Colin and Mary’s house so, too, things were changing in my professional world. As described in Chapter Seven, I had engaged my students in a debate, which had never before taken place during my accounting pedagogy lectures. In addition, I introduced performing art into the accounting pedagogy curriculum

⁶³ “Things are changing in this house, Mr. Roach, said Mrs. Medlock” (Burnett, 1969, p. 168).

⁶⁴ “They couldn’t well change for the worse, she continued” (Burnett, 1969, p. 168).

⁶⁵ “Let’s hope they’re changing for the better, Mrs. Medlock, he answered” (Burnett, 1969, p. 168).

when my students participated in a show that they had planned and executed. I also described how I involved students in choosing and drawing a metaphor of themselves as teachers in the classroom, and of me as their teacher educator. I videotaped my lectures. I held discussions and dialogues with critical friends, audiotaped and videotaped these discussions and dialogues, and recorded my reflections on these discussions and dialogues in my reflective journal.

In this chapter, Chapter Eight, I continue to address my second and third research questions. I highlight my teaching activities for the second trimester of 2014 commencing on 14 April 2014 and ending on 30 June 2014. I gave this chapter the title “Things Are Changing” because students had commented that I was changing and that I was more relaxed in my teaching. Furthermore, they commented on how I was involving them in new, exciting, and fun ways in the learning of accounting pedagogy.

8.2 Do I Know Who I Am?⁶⁶

I selected the words “Do I Know Who I Am?” from *The Secret Garden* as a heading for this section because it resonated with me and my activities at that point in my teaching of accounting pedagogy. Whilst inside the secret garden, Ben Weatherstaff, the gardener, climbs on a ladder and peeps over the secret garden wall because he is shocked to hear voices in the garden that has been locked for 10 years. Colin haughtily questions him, asking whether Ben Weatherstaff knows who Colin is. Likewise, I too was eager to find out how I was changing and who I was now becoming.

The second trimester commenced on 14 April 2014. During the vacation, I had what seemed to be a brilliant idea: I planned an activity for the third-year students along the lines of a personal oral storytelling session. I had examined the literature on oral storytelling and I came across an old Indian proverb, “Tell me a fact and I’ll learn. Tell me the truth and I’ll believe. But tell me a story and it will live in my heart forever” (as cited in Green, 2004). This made me think back to my days as a learner in school when teachers did not have advanced technology such as computers, data projectors, and interactive whiteboards. They sometimes conveyed their knowledge in the class using stories. When I questioned myself on what was most memorable for me from school, I discovered it was the stories my English teacher told the class when I was in Standard 6. He taught us history as well, and he would use his English teacher voice and expressions with the history content and convert it into a story. Most of the class excelled in history, which we initially had

⁶⁶ “Do you know who I am?” (Burnett, 1969, p. 182).

regarded as the most boring, dead, and lifeless subject in the school curriculum. Contrarily, this teacher made the facts come alive by asking the learners to dramatise certain sections in the history curriculum. The class used to hang onto his every word and we never had to learn history in rote fashion because we just remembered his stories (as described in Chapter Six). Similarly, I wanted to engage students in an oral storytelling session because as Bruner (1991) pointed out, stories could bring the normally lifeless concepts to life and make them more meaningful for students. Green and Brock (2000) described how stories can affect both our thinking and feelings, which can cause us to create mental images that can provide a clearer picture of a concept.

More significantly, Polichak and Gerrig (2002) alerted me that when telling stories, individuals pay attention and react to the stories if they participate in the action of the narrative—curiosity entices them to want to know what happened next. In this way, I understood that stories could have numerous benefits in the class because they could ignite students' interests, thus making the flow of the lectures smoother. The stories might also aid students in remembering the material as well as reducing their anxiety and reluctance to learn. I wanted to have students share stories from their own lives as a form of active learning. I anticipated that students might be more inclined to listen to a story told by their peers.

I hoped that if students could relate their stories of the real world to the accounting content of partnerships, they would be able to make meaning of that content. I anticipated that it would become relevant to their own experience, and would enhance their interpretation of the accounting content. In this regard, I wanted third-year students to relate a personal story that involved financial issues about themselves or someone they knew, for instance, a family member, a friend, a relative, or neighbour. They had to, thereafter, try to link the story with the section on partnerships in accounting. I told them no matter how trivial the incident seemed to be, it did not matter because I was more interested in how they could link it with the accounting content.

On Tuesday, 22 April 2014, the third-year students were scheduled to perform their storytelling activity. I had asked them to make a link between their stories and an accounting section they thought would be applicable to the story. I also wanted to see if they could relate their stories to partnerships. The students had some difficulty doing this but they helped each other by giving their views on where the story fit the accounting content best. The oral storytelling session is represented in the vignette below.

Vignette: Oral Storytelling Activity

I heard many stories from the students. For example, one student related how someone he knew had had an automated teller machine (ATM) card stolen and money withdrawn. Another story was about a grandmother who was robbed of her pension at the taxi rank, while one student told a story about how his house was broken into while they were sleeping. Although all these stories were original and interesting, the story about the father of one of the students, Pretty,⁶⁷ seemed the most relevant to me and I chose to relate that story.

Pretty's father had been injured at this workplace and lost an arm. He could not work anymore and so the company paid him compensation as well as the pension that was due to him. He invested the money with the pastor from his church into a small manufacturing firm. However, one day he went to cash a cheque at the bank and was told there was no money in the account. On enquiring with the pastor, he was informed by the pastor that he was sure the bank had erred and that he would go to the bank immediately. Sadly, the pastor left and never returned. He had swindled all the money, stolen the church vehicle, and disappeared.

Following the story, I engaged in a dialogue with students about which section in accounting they thought was best suited to this story. They related this story to the section on partnerships and engaged in dialogue about the legalities involved in a partnership. This dialogue between students carried on for a while and while the students were giving Pretty advice about what her father could do, they did not realise they were actually learning a lot about partnerships. They were also able to give Pretty some advice on the recourse her father could follow.

The storytelling activity went on over two lectures from 22 April 2014 until 29 April 2014. At the end of the two weeks, I asked the students what they had learnt from this activity. The students told me they had enjoyed the storytelling sessions and could engage with the accounting content that was discussed without having to refer to any notes. They claimed they would remember the sections discussed because the stories had personal meaning for them and when they thought about the story, they could recall quite easily the accounting content.

After the discussion with students, that afternoon, I watched the video recording of the storytelling activity and wrote my reflections in my reflective journal.

Apart from the students learning about a particular section in the accounting content, I learned a lot from this activity. The stories of the students were meaningful to them and, therefore, they were able to construct their own meaning in a natural setting without me trying to force them to learn. The stories were authentic stories and occurred in the students' natural home environments. Removing them from their natural environment and teaching them a concept was not so readily understood as when it occurred in their own contexts. The students gave their different opinions and views on each other's stories, for example, when they helped Pretty by giving her advice. In this way, they were unaware that they were learning so much about partnerships. (Personal journal, Tuesday, 29 April 2014)

⁶⁷ Pretty is a pseudonym used for the student.

8.3 The Experiment⁶⁸

I called this section “The Experiment” because in *The Secret Garden*, Mary and the village boy, Dickon, experiment by bringing all Dickon’s pet animals to Colin’s room, and they observe his reaction to the animals. This so excites Colin that he makes a decision to go in his wheelchair into the garden so he can view it for himself. When visiting the garden, Colin’s health improves in leaps and bounds and eventually he starts walking unaided. Their experiment succeeds and Colin is healed. I drew a parallel between that experiment and my experimental journey of exploring different teaching approaches and then reflecting on pedagogical learning.

While the third-year students were busy relating their stories, I had lectures with the second-year students. My lecture with them was also on Tuesday, 22 April 2014. At the commencement of the lecture, we chatted a while about the success of the show they had put on in the previous trimester. Thereafter, students informed me that they were unhappy with my teaching approach and wished to discuss it with me. I was excited that it was not only me who was changing—students were also changing. Previously, they would not have dared question my teaching. The discussion with students is included in the vignette below.

Vignette: Discussion with students on my adopting a purely student-centred approach in my teaching

Students explained to me that, whilst they were all in favour of me adopting a student-centred approach in my teaching because they now had a voice in what they learned and how they learned, they felt that my input in the lesson was necessary. They felt that because of my experience and my knowledge in the subject, I could provide them with valuable information. They used assessment in accounting as an example. Accounting is marked differently in that even if an answer is incorrect, students get marks for the methodology used in arriving at the answer. They claimed that they could learn a lot from me regarding methodology marking. As one student claimed, “I think some topics, for example, assessment in accounting, requires a person with experience to help us with method marking. If we just do it on our own, we are not going to know what to do.”

Students also stated that I should be giving them some notes. However, they did add that they were not asking me to give them all the information in the notes and then go through the notes line by line as previously, but they wanted some guidelines. They also felt that when I taught and related my teaching to my own experiences, the stories I told them were most enjoyable and inspired them. As one student said, “Mam, you inspire us, you are the one that makes us love accounting, you make us want to be better teachers.”

After the lecture, I retreated to my office to have some quiet time to think and reflect.

My ideas to make my lectures totally student-centred did not work out as I had planned. The students are not against student-centredness as such, but they want a combination of teacher-

⁶⁸ “We’ll try the experiment” (Burnett, 1969, p. 172).

centred and student-centred teaching approaches. I understand students' motivation for saying this because they are so used to my role modelling, where I gave them notes all the time, that it is going to take some time to wean them off this mode. Taking responsibility for their own learning by making their own notes is something foreign to them. Maybe they are insecure in thinking what they had to write about may not be the correct thing. I think I must slowly wean them off the attitude of not having confidence in themselves—I think the approaches I adopted might be a bit too radical. I am going to go a bit slower because I seem to be confusing my students. I quite like what the students told me about me inspiring them and being the “inspiration” to all of them, but are they patronising me or they trying to hoodwink me into giving them the notes? I will have to see what happens as we go along. (Personal journal, Tuesday, 22 April 2014)

My next lectures with the second-year students and third-year students were due to take place on Tuesday, 29 April 2014. When the third-year students came to class to complete their storytelling activity, I had a discussion with them about what the second-year students had proposed. When I asked their opinion, they had the same feeling about a combination of student-centred teaching and teacher-centred pedagogy. I told them that, as yet, I had not designed any activities that had a combination of both methods because I wanted to find out more about a combination of teacher-centred and student-centred pedagogy. I did the same with second-year students later that afternoon. I told both groups that I would see them on Monday, 5 May 2014.

On reading an article from (Student centred or teacher centred education, 2012), I found that some students stated that teacher-centred education was the more effective strategy. Nevertheless, the article advised that it seemed a much better option for teachers to use a mix of teacher-centred and student-centred teaching approaches. When a mix of approaches was used, students could benefit from the strengths of both approaches. I read that in teacher-centred education, the focus was on the teacher who talked whilst learners sat back and listened. If activities were given by the teacher, the learners worked by themselves because collaboration was discouraged. During student-centred instruction, “students and teachers shared the focus. Instead of only listening to the teacher, students and teachers worked together. Group work was encouraged, and students learned to collaborate and communicate with one another” (Student centred or teacher centred education, 2012).

I also read that, “Instead of getting bored with teacher-centred education or losing sight of their goals in a completely student-centred classroom, students can benefit from a well-balanced

educational atmosphere” (Student centred or teacher centred education, 2012). Armed with this information, I prepared my next accounting pedagogy lesson.

8.4 I Shall Live Forever⁶⁹

This section was given the heading “I Shall Live Forever” because in *The Secret Garden*, Colin shouts this out when he enters the secret garden for the first time. There is some kind of magic in the garden. I had a similar optimistic feeling about my pedagogic learning and role modelling. I now felt that I had a more in-depth understanding of both student-centred and teacher-centred approaches so I thought up several activities for the students to perform that could incorporate both. I did this by carefully studying my existing curriculum for accounting pedagogy, and considering innovative ways in which I could engage my students with the content. The next lesson was on Monday, 5 May 2014. The topic I planned to introduce was based on how learners learn in accounting. The lesson is described in the vignette below.

Vignette: Discussion with students on how learners learn in accounting

I commenced the lesson by asking students why it was important to understand how learners learn. Students answered by claiming it was important because it would not only help the teacher plan their lessons but give the teacher an idea of the different strategies to adopt for the different learners in a class—because not all learners learn in the same way. Also, it would give the teacher an idea on how to assess learners.

I told students that I had uploaded two articles for them to read in the Blackboard online classroom. One article was on the differences between learning abilities and learning styles, and the other article was on critical constructivist teaching. Students were given a week to read these articles and on Monday, 12 May during the lecture, we were going to discuss what they had read. After the lesson, I was worried whether students would complete the exercise so I recorded my thoughts in my reflective journal.

I am hoping the students read the articles because I found the articles interesting. But I am worried because both articles require a through critical understanding. Maybe I should have not given them the articles, but read them with them in class. But then I will be doing what I always do, trying to learn for them. As I am writing in my journal, I catch a glimpse of this movie *Field of Dreams* (Gordon, Gordon & Robinson, 1989) on television. It says, “build it and they will come.” It is so uncanny that this is said in the movie at the exact time that I am reflecting on whether I should have given my students the readings or not. The movie was about an actor building a baseball field for legendary baseball players who had long since died. He hears this whisper in the wind, “build it and they will come,” so he builds it and they do come back from the dead to play on the field. A bit far-fetched but it gives me the answer

⁶⁹ “I Shall Live Forever—and Ever—and Ever!” (Burnett, 1969, p. 167).

I am looking for. Let them try and read the articles first. (Personal journal, Monday, 5 May 2014)

On Monday, 12 May 2014, I invited my two critical friends, Mr. C and Dr. J, to sit in on my lecture. When the students arrived, the complaints began before I could greet them. They felt, just as I had anticipated, that the articles were too complex and difficult. As one student complained, “Mam, those articles were too difficult—I read them about three times but I still do not know anything that I read.” Another student complained, “It was painful, I couldn’t make head or tail of it.” In addition, they claimed that their tutor, who was a doctoral student, could not understand the articles. I questioned them on what about the articles was difficult. They said everything was difficult. The language was above their level, the argument was beyond their level of understanding, and both articles did not make any sense to them. I dismissed the students and told them I would discuss the issue in the next lecture. I used the time left to engage in a discussion with my two critical friends.

Mr. C said he had read a bit of the article whilst I was busy with the students and he had found it too dense and too high impact. Dr. J stated that even his final-year students would not be able to deconstruct the articles, and the situation was exacerbated because my students were not used to this style of learning. I explained that whilst I was aware of this, I was trying to do things differently. I asked their advice and Mr. C advised that I speak to subject lecturers for the module on education, because they were always giving students articles to read and critically analyse. After the lecture, I arranged to meet with the subject lecturers for the module on education. Whilst waiting for them, I recorded this reflection in my journal.

After this conversation with my critical friends, I have a lot to think about. What was I thinking when I planned this lecture? I so want to do things differently that I did not think the process through. I somehow do understand how the students feel but they have to start, at some point, to take responsibility for their own learning. I can’t suddenly change my teaching style, but I think I have to gradually wean them into it. What Mr. C said is true, it is pointless giving them two full articles to read when they do not understand even a third of one article’s content. It worries me that I have to treat second-year students like high school learners. But I suppose I moulded them to be like this, I role modelled these behaviours. I can see the living contradiction staring me in the face. This is not the type of student I want, but this is the type of student I have created. This is quite a lot for me to absorb all at once. (Personal journal, Monday, 12 May 2014)

The education lecturers informed me that they involved the writing centre and student academic development unit in their lectures—to come to the class, team teach with them, and assist students in reading and analysing journal articles.

I contacted the student academic development unit and the writing centre, who were more than willing to work specifically with my accounting education students. I made arrangements for the second- and third-year students to have their lectures at the same time on Thursday, 15 May 2014 so that both cohorts of students could benefit from time spent with these tutors. Before the lecture began, I explained the purpose of having the five tutors in the class—three from the student academic development unit, and two from the writing centre. I asked the tutors’ and students’ permission if I could videotape the session and no objection was raised.

The tutors then handed out an academic text and a journal article to the students. They first asked them to look at the title. They had to analyse the article title first. Then they had to look through the text for words that were related to the title and find the meanings of these words. Thereafter, they had to read each paragraph and identify the key words that gave the gist of what the paragraph was about. They also had to find the meanings of the key words in the paragraphs. Finally, they had to find the links between the paragraphs. When they had completed this, they had to write a short summary in their own words based on what they thought the piece of academic writing was about. They followed the same procedure with the journal article. All this took about two hours but it was an inspiring two hours for me and my students.

8.5 It Is Graidly⁷⁰

I used the words “It is Graidly” from *The Secret Garden* for the heading of this section. What this means in English is that it was grand. Dickon says that he had never seen an afternoon as grand as the one when Colin comes for the first time into the secret garden. “The cherry trees were in full bloom and the apple trees whose buds were pink and white had burst open” (Burnett, 1969, pp. 176–177). It was also a grand time for me because not only had my students learnt about reading and analysing academic texts, I too had learnt a lot from the tutors.

On Monday, 19 May 2014, I combined my second-year and third-year students together in one lecture as a follow-up session. I had a list of topics I had worked on. I was trying to keep a balance between a teacher-centred approach and a student-centred approach and, therefore, I wrote the topics

⁷⁰ “Eh! It is graidely” (Burnett, 1969, p. 176).

on the board. I explained that we were going to work through an article but first, we were going to go through the notes and worksheets. The topic was “Reflection and Analysis of the Accounting Student Teacher’s Understanding of Teaching and Learning Accounting.” I showed students a slide on a PowerPoint presentation of the different subsections that would be discussed under this topic. The topic dealt with students’ reflections about their role as future accounting teachers. I also asked students to look at themselves critically and ask themselves certain questions like, “Why did I choose to become a teacher of accounting, and what are the characteristics of a good accounting teacher?” When they completed both questions on the worksheet I had provided for them, they had to discuss with a friend to what extent they thought they met the requirements of a good accounting teacher. Once they finished this section, they had to identify areas in which they felt they needed improvement, and what strategies they could put in place to improve this area. The first part of the lecture involved the students. It also involved collaborating with other students because they had to engage in peer discussions. Then I discussed the policy expectations of a teacher with them. I asked students if they were happy with this approach, and if they had any other ideas on how to approach this section. They did not volunteer any other suggestions and so I dismissed them and told them we would meet the next day and continue with the section.

The next day, Tuesday, 20 May 2014, when the students came to class I told them that I was going to videotape the lecture and asked if they had any objections. No objections were raised. Once they settled down, I handed them the notes with the sections they had to complete left blank. They had to complete a section on why they chose to be an accounting teacher. They were required to write about five points, and I gave them 10 minutes in which to complete this. Then they had to move to the partner they had chosen and read the notes on the characteristics of a good accounting teacher. Next, each of them had to write down to what extent they thought they met those requirements and, thereafter, they had to exchange this with their partners and get their partner’s opinion on it. While the lesson was carrying on, I could sense a bit of hesitation amongst the students to exchange ideas on the areas they thought they needed improvement in. I stopped them and asked what the problem was. They said this new approach was different and exciting but they were not too happy to share their shortcomings with a partner. Just then, I had a brilliant idea and I asked them if it would be okay if I completed the task and shared it with the whole class. They readily agreed and I said I would share it at the next lecture. My next lecture with them was on Monday, 26 May 2014.

Over the weekend, I thought about what I was going to say and, as always, I got my best ideas when I wrote in my reflective journal.

I don't know why I volunteered to do this, but I really have nothing to hide. I have to role model this behaviour for my students and then I can ask students to follow my example. I wanted this new approach to be successful, therefore, I have to collaborate with students. I am sure by Monday I can write something that is going to be worthwhile. (Journal entry, Saturday, 24 May 2014)

On Monday, 26 May 2014, I had completed my reflective exercise and I was ready to share this with students:

I did not originally intend becoming an accounting teacher. I had trained as an English teacher but when I got my first appointment as a high school teacher, the school had no commerce teacher for the matriculants. I was the only one with some experience of teaching accounting because I had taught it at two technical colleges before then. I was married and had two children, so I needed this job. I accepted and started teaching accounting, business economics, and economics to Grade 12 learners. It was a very big challenge for me because the college-level accounting was more business orientated, which was different from school-level accounting. Night after night, I would sit working out the exercises and preparing my lessons for the next day. I made quite a few mistakes while teaching but I was honest and told the learners that I was teaching school accounting for the first time. After a few weeks, I settled in and found that I quite liked teaching accounting. Business economics and economics were no problem because I had studied these up to N6 level. There was no turning back and I became an accomplished accounting teacher. (My story to students on why I chose to be an accounting teacher, personal journal, Monday, 26 May 2014)

When I read my story to the students, they were intrigued and interested. As promised, I told them that I was going to highlight the areas in my teaching that needed improvement and the areas where I did not meet the characteristics of a good accounting teacher. Then, I was going to explain the strategies I had developed to address my shortcomings, which I read to them. As indicated in the following journal entry, students were very surprised that I was able to identify my shortcomings. The fact that I had been so honest and forthright in my story seemed to make them feel more comfortable about sharing their areas of improvement with each other.

After the lecture yesterday, the atmosphere in the class today is different. Students seemed more connected to me and I can sense a feeling of warmth in their attitude. Sharing my story with them seems to have changed their attitudes, and openly admitting my shortcomings made me seem more human. I think they realised that even lecturers go through trials and tribulations in their personal lives and are not just unfeeling, cold people. I role modelled this attitude of openness, honesty, and forthrightness with my students. I am learning to trust people and I am not so insecure as to think they would think less of me. It is the first time I openly admitted to my students that there are shortcomings in my teaching. Previously, I would keep up the facade and image that I am an expert accounting teacher. I can sense I am changing and becoming more confident in myself to be so honest and truthful. The students are seeing a different side of me and, instead of thinking less of me, they empathise with me. If I role model this behaviour and attitude, then my students will not be afraid and insecure to identify their shortcomings and take measures to address those shortcomings. In this way, they will become better teachers for their learners at school. (Personal journal, Tuesday, 27 May 2014)

At the end of the activity, I asked students if any of them would like to share their shortcomings with the class—and then we could help them to identify strategies to address these shortcomings. It started very slowly but before long, we were having a very fruitful discussion. It was very insightful and informative as students came up with bright, original, and innovative ideas and strategies to address their shortcomings. At the end of the lecture, I asked students if the approach I had used for this topic was more in line with what they wanted. I was satisfied with their answers and could not wait to write in my reflective journal.

It seems that I am getting it right, slowly but surely. I know that I have a lot of work still, but at least my students are happy. To have a class full of unhappy students is not a very pleasant environment. I am learning from my students what is best for them. There is no point trying to teach them something that I am happy with but which has no impact on them. The whole purpose of my teaching is to broaden my students' knowledge and develop them into life-long learners with critical and analytical skills, not to make myself happy. (Personal journal, Wednesday, 28 May 2014)

8.6 Delight Reigned⁷¹

I have named this section “Delight Reigned.” In *The Secret Garden*, delight does reign when Colin gets into the garden and is so overcome with the trees and flowers and the birds. However, the most delightful moment occurs when the other children ask him to help them dig the earth. He is a feeble, sickly boy but he makes an effort and it seems as if the earth transfers all its energy and power to Colin so that he is able to dig beds for planting the flowers. So too, my teaching activities over the past weeks so invigorated and energised me that delight reigned in my lecture room.

On Monday, 2 June 2014, I had an accounting lecture with the second- and third-year students, combined. We were going to discuss the policy expectations of an accounting teacher. I uploaded the policy documents, namely, The Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS, Department of Education [DoE] 2002) and The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Document for Accounting Grades (10–12) [DBE] (2012) to the online Blackboard classroom. Immediately after the 1994 elections, when South Africa became a democracy and apartheid was abolished, the National Education and Training Forum set about revising the syllabi of all subjects offered at schools in South Africa. The point of revising the entire school curriculum was to remove racist and other insensitive language from the existing syllabi and lay the foundations for a common national syllabus.

I requested that students read these documents so that we could engage in a meaningful discussion. During the lecture, we had a class discussion about the RNCS and I explained the history of outcomes-based education (OBE).⁷² Outcomes-based education was the teaching approach adopted in South Africa in 1999. I gave students an overview of the historical development and the introduction of the CAPS document. Once this was done, I requested that the class conduct an in-class debate on the advantages and disadvantages of both policy documents. I asked for volunteers for CAPS and volunteers for RNCS to lead the debate. Four students were identified and I told them they would have to make all the arrangements. I told them I would be there but I was not going to dominate the debate. They could ask me for help if needed. I wanted students to read and understand the policy documents by themselves. One of the shortcomings I had identified in my teaching was

⁷¹ “And delight reigned” (Burnett, 1969, p. 176).

⁷² “Outcomes-based education was the teaching approach adopted in South Africa in 1999. Outcomes-based education (OBE) was an educational theory that based each part of an educational system around goals (outcomes). By the end of the educational experience, each student should have achieved the goal. There was no single specified style of teaching or assessment in OBE; instead, classes, opportunities, and assessments should all help students achieve the specified outcomes. The role of the teacher was to act as a facilitator. One of the key components of OBE was that learners should be actively involved in the learning process” (Hiralaal, 2000).

not preparing my students to become critical thinkers. Hence, this was one of the strategies I had adopted to address this shortcoming. I gave students the rest of the lecture time off to plan and discuss the debate.

It is extremely rewarding for me to see students working independently and planning the debate. They seem to have matured and taken responsibility for their learning because they are behaving in such a self-assured manner. I saw four volunteers take charge and delegate to other students what they had to do. (Personal journal, Monday, 2 June 2014)

The debate was going to take place on Thursday, 5 June 2014. I invited my critical friends, Mr. C and Dr. J, to attend the debate and told the first-year student they were welcome to attend. I told students I was not going to interfere, but was going to observe the proceedings. The four leaders took charge of the debate and explained the rules of the debate to the whole class. They told first-year students that they were merely observers and could not take part in the debate. I asked whether I could videotape the debate and all present, including my two critical friends, agreed.

Once the debate began there was no stopping the students. From the comments, I could ascertain that they had read the documents thoroughly because they made some really pertinent arguments for and against. I was pleased they made some comments that I did not even know about the policy documents. I was learning from my students as well. I had a 2-hour lecture period and the debate was going to be for one hour. During this time, I did not say much, and merely observed and wrote some reflections in my reflective journal.

I am thinking while looking at the students. Given the correct environment and the opportunity, students can really behave in a professional manner. The four leaders have everyone controlled and the proceedings are going on in an organised way. Some of the first-year students are giggling and immediately they are called to task and warned if it happens again they will be asked to leave. I sniggered quietly because I did not want students to think I was laughing at them. (Personal journal, Thursday, 5 June 2014)

My two critical friends had to leave before the end but promised to meet with me later. The end result of the debate was a draw because there were very strong arguments from both sides. As I sat back after the debate, I reflected on what took place.

I am very happy with the depth and insight my students displayed during the debate. Apart from the way in which they handled the debate, their arguments about the RNCS and CAPS are valid and well thought out. They did not just say things, but really gave deep and thought-provoking comments. Some of the analogies used were really hilarious but they got the points home. For instance, one of the students described OBE as a *shongololo*. A shongololo is a snake that slides and slithers along and curls its body as it moves. He said OBE made him think of this shongololo because it slithered in and curled the education system and then slithered out again. I think that was a very apt and original description of OBE. I am exceptionally pleased with my students. (Personal journal, Thursday, 5 June 2014)

I met later with my critical friends about the debate. The discussions I had with them and the students at the next lecture are outlined in the vignette below.

Vignette: Discussion with critical friends on debate

Dr J stated that he was very impressed with the way students had handled the debate and he himself had learnt a lot about the two policy documents. Mr. C observed that students had seemed to have a thorough understanding of the two policy documents and had done additional reading about the implications of these documents to teacher training programmes. He also stated that he noticed that I did not interfere in the lesson at all. I answered, “Yes, that was my intention. I did not want to get too involved and end up dominating the debate. I wanted to allow the students freedom to learn and make mistakes and then grow from their mistakes.”

When I met with the students again on Monday, 9 June 2014 for accounting pedagogy, I told them how pleased I was with the manner in which they handled the debate. On questioning students about the debate, one student commented, “I learned so much about the RNCS and the CAPS. Some very salient points were being debated. I had an education assignment on the education policies of South Africa so I was very pleased with the debate. It helped me a lot with the assignment.”

Students also added that when they went on teaching practice, they found that teachers at the school used the CAPS policy document like a bible. They used to feel embarrassed to say that they did not know much about the document when the teachers used to discuss the CAPS in the staffroom. Now, they could confidently take part in the discussions

As the title of this section suggested, delight did reign when I heard the students’ comments. It was most gratifying to know that they had benefitted from the debate. Moreover, students were using the knowledge they had acquired during the debate to prepare themselves for teaching in the classroom. I hoped that these activities might result in an improvement in their performance during teaching practice. I had one last activity for them before we closed for the June vacation.

8.7 Bedding out Plants⁷³

I chose the heading, “Bedding out Plants,” from *The Secret Garden* for this section because, in my teaching activities during this term, I was having new ideas and creating new improved ways of teaching—similar to the new plants that were being bedded out. In spring, those beds would be in full bloom with a variety of beautiful flowers. I envisaged that I was bedding out the students in preparation for their season of full bloom. I was engaging them in these new teaching and learning activities hoping that when the time was right, they too would be in full bloom.

I had two weeks left before the start of the mid-year vacation. At the end of the vacation, students would be going to schools on teaching practice for four weeks. I wanted to give students the opportunity to prepare and present a lesson so when they went to schools, they would at least have had some practice of standing in front a class. I thought it pointless them teaching their peers because their class peers already knew the content. I therefore arranged for the second- and third-year students to teach the first-year students. The first step in the micro-teaching lessons was getting students to prepare a well-designed lesson plan. After the meeting with the general subject didactics lecturer in the first term, we had sat together and redesigned our lesson plan template, taking into account different lesson plan templates from various schools. We designed a lesson plan template that was concise and very much in line with what the schools used. The students were already using the template and the feedback from the other committee members indicated that students were pleased with it.

It was Tuesday, 10 June 2014, the day the second-year students were going to teach the first-year students. I had divided the students according to the section of accounting they were going to teach. I had told them I was going to assess their teaching using the assessment tool that lecturers use when they go to schools to assess them during teaching practice. I was impressed with the second-year students because they had dressed smartly and professionally for the lessons. I asked the second-year students as well as the first-year students if it was okay to videotape the lessons. I told students to bring along a Universal Serial Bus (USB)—the connection used to connect a computer to devices such as digital cameras, printers, scanners, and external hard drives. They could download the taped teaching session, view it later, and self-evaluate their teaching.

⁷³ “They would go up the path and down that one and cross the other and go round among the fountain flower-beds as if they were looking at the ‘bedding-out plants’ the head gardener, Mr. Roach had been having arranged” (Burnett, 1969, p. 168).

I warned students that I might be stopping them in the middle of their lessons to correct mistakes and give them assistance when needed. The students had had to prepare a proper lesson plan for me and give it to me before the start of the lesson. As the students handed me their lesson plans, I could see a terrible mistake on my part. We had not discussed and deliberated on the merits of the new lesson plan template. Students were writing all kinds of things under the subheadings. Time was spent discussing the lesson plan and not much teaching took place that day. I decided that night I had to think up something very quickly and went home with a heavy heart. I desperately needed some alone time with my reflective journal. Writing my thoughts down always helped me to come to terms with whatever was worrying me.

I am cross with myself. How did I miss going over the lesson plan before giving my students this activity of presenting lessons? What should I do? Abandon the lessons and work through the lesson plan. But they need some experience of teaching as well. The time is not enough to go through the lesson plan and complete the lessons on time. The university is due to close. Wait, maybe I could call students in on a Friday afternoon and Saturday morning and discuss the lesson plan template. I will discuss it with the students, tomorrow. I knew I would come up with something if I wrote down my troubles. (Personal journal, Tuesday, 10 June 2014)

On Wednesday morning, 11 June 2014, I spoke to students about attending a session on Friday afternoon and Saturday morning. They all agreed. On Friday afternoon, 13 June 2014, we met at 3:00 pm. I gave each student a copy of the lesson plan template. This lecture was definitely a teacher-centred lecture because I had to explain the lesson plan step by step. However, I remembered I had read that “teacher-centred learning should also have a major role to play in improving the quality of the learning experience in higher education” (Bailey, 2008, p. 71). I relaxed after I remembered this advice and proceeded with the lecture. I briefly discussed the teaching aids and teaching resources because the show they had held last term had given them a very comprehensive understanding of teaching aids, media, and teaching resources. I had already explained how they should handle prior knowledge. The section on assessment strategies needed some more discussion. I told them that the next morning Saturday, 14 June 2014, we would discuss assessment strategies.

Sitting at my desk at home, I am chewing my nails trying to find an exciting and innovative way to lecture assessment strategies tomorrow. I am feeling more comfortable now after I made arrangements to teach students about the lesson plan. Nevertheless, I am still

disappointed with myself for having missed such a vital aspect, the lesson plan. I decided to consult the Internet for some help. (Personal journal, Friday, 13 June 2014)

While perusing the Internet, I came across an online site that had some information on assessment strategies. Actually, the site had 20 different assessment strategies (Briggs, 2014). Because it is an open educational resource, the information was available in the public domain and there were no intellectual property rights. I could download and repurpose the information in any way that I wished. I downloaded the information on different assessment strategies and, although there were 20 different assessment strategies, I chose only a few to work on with my students. The rest I downloaded and then uploaded the information into my online Blackboard classroom. As I read the notes, I became more interested. The strategies given were original but not those we had been using forever such as test, assignments, case study, and presentation.

Before I go to sleep tonight, I must record how thrilled I am that I stumbled across this site. I was, a short while ago, a very lost and confused person about how I was going to proceed with my lecture tomorrow. But now, I am actually looking forward to going to class tomorrow. I have these exciting activities to work with in the morning. Going to campus on a Saturday morning does not seem so terrible after all. I am going to bed a satisfied person. (Personal journal, Friday, 13 June 2014)

I told the students we were going to try out three of the assessment strategies because they had told me they had difficulty putting what they knew theoretically into practice in an actual classroom situation. I chose the following assessment strategies to work with “Four Corners,” “Analogy Prompt,” and “Think-Pair-Share” (Briggs, 2014). I asked students if I could videotape, and explained that we could watch a replay of the video and decide on the feasibility of using such an approach in an actual classroom.

The first assessment strategy was called Four Corners. I wrote signs and stuck them on four corners of the lecture venue. On the signs, I wrote “Strongly Agree,” “Agree Somewhat,” “Strongly Disagree,” and “Not Sure.” I told students I was going to make a statement about accounting pedagogy and they had to move to the relevant corner of the room depending how they felt about the statement. When they were in the corners, I looked at the number of students in each corner and, by the numbers, I could see who actually understood what I said or not. There were some students in the Not Sure corner and this gave me an indication that when teaching that section again, maybe,

I needed to explain more clearly. Then I asked for volunteers to pose a question or make a statement and let the students move to their chosen corners. Once we had done this a few times, I stopped and we all returned to our seats. We watched a replay of the video and we evaluated this method by writing the responses on the board. Some of the observations students made were that it was interesting but a bit too disruptive, especially with the number of learners in one class at schools.

The next strategy we tried was the Think-Pair-Share strategy. I asked students to choose a partner and sit next to the partner. Then I asked a question. I gave students five minutes to read about that topic in their textbooks they had to teach each other about the section. After that, I asked them all to return to their seats and we engaged in a whole class discussion about the topic. Students were asked not to give answers verbatim from their notes but tell us what their partners had taught them. After the session, we replayed the video and evaluated this method by writing the comments on the board. Students had said there was less moving around and they learned from each other.

The third strategy we tried was the Analogy Prompt. I gave students five minutes to read a paragraph in their notes. After reading the paragraph, they had to come up with a suitable analogy prompt to reinforce a point they had read in the notes. One of the students said, “accounting is like the branches of a tree because.....” Then the other students had to complete the analogy, for example, accounting is like a tree because it has different sections like the branches of the tree. We did the analogy prompt for about 10 minutes and students enjoyed this so much I had to force them to stop. I asked students whether they had a clearer understanding of the types of assessment strategies they could use. They said it was not possible to have more than one assessment strategy per lesson. They saw the errors of their previous way of including many assessment strategies in one lesson, but not actually doing the assessments. They said they just wrote them there to fill the space in the lesson plan. I had realised that when I looked at the lesson plans they were submitting to me.

I know that I rushed the section on lesson planning but I am going to do an in-depth teaching session on lesson plans when they come back. It seems a bit futile because they are going on teaching practice after the mid-year vacation and they have a superficial knowledge of the lesson plan. I do feel guilty not having gone through the lesson plan in a more organised and in-depth way. I just provided them with the basic knowledge on how to complete the lesson plan template. (Personal journal, Saturday, 14 June 2014)

The discussion I had with first-year students on their teaching sessions with second- and third-year students is represented in the vignette below.

Vignette: Discussion with first-year students about second- and third-year students' lesson with them

We proceeded during normal lecture time on Tuesday, 17 June 2014 with the second- and third-year students teaching the first-year students. As students, both second-year and third-year were presenting their lessons, I realised how much guidance and help they needed. I could not fully understand their mentor teachers at the schools giving them negative comments on their lessons. Many times during the lesson presentations, I had to stop students to correct them. After all the students presented their lessons, and before I could have a discussion with the second- and third-year students, I arranged a meeting with the first-year students.

The first-year students commented that while some of the students taught with vigour, energy, and passion, other students were boring, lifeless, and lacked enthusiasm. They also found that students did not ask many questions or involve them in the lesson, but attempted to finish the lesson by completing as much as they had planned for the lesson. There was no discussion on the topics taught and students went directly into the teaching without determining their prior knowledge.

Reading these comments from the first-year students worried me greatly. I decided to watch the videotapes I had made of the second- and third-year students teaching. There was very little evidence of social constructivist teaching in their classroom activities and it became obvious to me that I could not expect my students to teach in ways they had not experienced. The reason for this was, probably, that I had been not role modelling pedagogy in my teaching that gave my students the support to develop more powerful understandings of social constructivist teaching.

My analysis of the first-year students' responses highlighted the living contradiction that I had become aware of in my teaching activities. It became apparent to me that my task as a teacher educator of accounting pedagogy was to help students become aware of perspectives such as social constructivism, and the implications of such perspectives for teaching accounting. I had become critical of my previous teaching practices when I became aware that my teaching activities were not indicative of my aims. To try and align my pedagogic aims with my practice, I had begun developing new ways of teaching accounting pedagogy that were more aligned to my teaching aims of social constructivist theories. However, I had neglected to consider the life experiences of my students who, like me, had probably gone through a school system where they were taught to be passive recipients of knowledge. The transformation that I was bringing about in my teaching activities was still insufficient to counteract those strong influences from the past, and I became aware that I had to more explicitly role model social constructivist teaching styles in my teaching practice.

Looking at comments from first-year students, I think I need to spend some time over the vacation, reflecting on everything that happened over the last term. There is a lot I have to reflect on, and I have to engage in a rigorous interrogation of the evidence that has been revealed after documenting my teaching experiences during this term. (Personal journal, Friday, 20 June 2014)

8.8 Where You Tend a Rose, a Thistle Can't Grow⁷⁴

The wise words, “where you tend a rose, a thistle can’t grow,” are spoken by Susan Sotherby when she sees Colin standing upright in the secret garden. In the novel, she is referring to Colin’s father, Archibald Craven, who is somewhere else whilst his son has recovered and is standing by himself. However, I interpreted these words in the context of my study and related it to my students’ learning. Because I had not been role modelling the perspectives of a social constructivist approach in my pedagogic practice, my students were experiencing difficulties adjusting to this teaching approach. However, I was changing—as the heading of this chapter indicates—but my students still needed time and patience to align themselves with my personal and pedagogic transformation. This became apparent when I gave them the two articles to analyse, and they did not even attempt it. They were so used to me taking charge and doing everything for them, they could not take responsibility for their own learning. Another example of this misalignment between what I was expecting students to do and what they were actually doing was demonstrated when first-year students commented on the second- and third-year students’ lesson with them.

These incidents have made me aware that my professional learning is going to be a slow and never ending process and, therefore, I should expect the students’ growth to take place along a similar path. Therefore, the words I have used to bring this chapter to a close are very profound in relation to my learning and to students’ learning. I cannot plant a thistle and expect a rose to grow.

In this chapter, I narrated how I explored my pedagogic practice for the second trimester of 2014, beginning on 14 April 2014 and ending on 20 June 2014. I showed how I involved students in an oral storytelling session. Thereafter, I discussed how I uploaded two articles into their online Blackboard classrooms and asked students to read and analyse these articles. Because students experienced difficulty reading and analysing these articles, I got tutors from the writing centre and student academic development to come to the class and assist students. I gave students an activity

⁷⁴ “Two things cannot be in one place. Where you tend a rose, a thistle can’t grow” (Burnett, 1969, p. 231).

of identifying their shortcomings as future accounting teachers; they were reluctant to share this information with their peers. However, when I completed the exercise and shared my story and my shortcomings with them, they were no longer hesitant to share their stories. Students were then involved in a debate in the class on the RNCS and CAPS documents followed by a lesson on lesson planning. I concluded the term with second- and third-year students teaching the first-year students.

In the next chapter, I demonstrate how I involved students in an online discussion board activity. I highlight a nodal moment I experienced during the online activity. In addition, I reveal how I developed the nodal moment into a conference paper, which I presented at a teaching and learning conference for feedback from conference attendees.

CHAPTER NINE: WHEN THE SUN WENT DOWN⁷⁵

*Am I a hunchback
Just look at me all over
Are my legs crooked
I tell you I can do it
I can, yes, I can do it⁷⁶*

9.1 Are You Making Magic?⁷⁷

When I developed this chapter, I chose the heading, “When the Sun Went Down,” because my teacher educator experiences as narrated in the chapter demonstrate how my sun really went down for a while when I realised I had taken my students for granted. In *The Secret Garden*, the sun goes down for the Mary, Colin, and Dickon when the gardener, Ben Weatherstaff, finds them in the secret garden. They think he is going to tell Colin’s father. However, when Ben sees Colin standing upright, he is shocked because everyone believed that Colin was a hunchback with crooked legs because he had remained in bed all his young life, claiming he was bedridden. I used the words of Colin from *The Secret Garden* to develop a tanka⁷⁸ poem (Hirsch, 2014), as an introduction to this chapter. When Colin, who has been in a wheelchair, stands up straight, Dickon asks him if he is doing magic. I related this to my teaching experiences that I narrate in this chapter because, although I experienced doubts, I was able to draw on my learning thus far to tell myself “Yes, I can do it.”

In Chapter Eight, I elaborated on my daily teaching experiences for the second trimester of 2014 commencing 14 April 2014 and ending on 30 June 2014. Firstly, I showed how I used storytelling as a social constructivist pedagogical tool in my classroom. This was followed by a rendition of a discussion with students where they expressed their concerns about my adoption of a mainly student-centred approach in the classroom. I narrated how I uploaded two journal articles in the Blackboard online classroom for students to read, analyse, and reflect on. I gave a detailed account of how I engaged the assistance of the writing centre and student academic development unit to

⁷⁵ “When the Sun Went Down” (Burnett, 1969, p. 185).

⁷⁶ “‘Look at me,’ he commanded. ‘Look at me all over. Am I a hunchback? Have I got crooked legs?’” (Burnett, 1969, p. 186).

⁷⁷ “Are you making Magic, he asked sharply” (Burnett, 1969, p. 185).

⁷⁸ The Japanese tanka is a thirty-one-syllable poem, traditionally written in a single unbroken line. The first and third lines have five syllables, the second, fourth and fifth lines have seven syllables (Hirsch, 2014).

assist students with reading and analysing journal articles. I then recounted my session with students about their understandings of why they chose to be accounting teachers. Thereafter, I demonstrated how I engaged students in a debate on the positive and negative aspects of the *Revised National Curriculum Statements* (DoE, 2002) and the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements* (DBE, 2012) documents. I then proceeded to narrate the happenings of the second- and third-year students' experiences of preparing and presenting a lesson to the first-year students.

In this chapter, I continue responding to my second and third research questions. I describe how I involved students in a 5-week Blackboard online discussion board activity. I show how I asked students to keep a reflective journal to record their reflections on the online activity. I also offer reflections from my journal where I recorded my reflections on the online activity. I recount how I experienced a nodal moment during the activity and found a metaphor to represent the nodal moment. I then narrate how I developed the activity into a conference paper, which I presented at a national university teaching and learning conference. I offer my reflections on the blind peer review of the conference paper and the feedback I received at the conference.

9.2 Go and Get It⁷⁹

In *The Secret Garden*, the words, “go and get it,” are uttered by Colin who tells the gardener, Ben Weatherstaff, to bring a rose tree planted in a pot. He says these words because he was extremely enthusiastic about planting this rose tree in the ground in the secret garden before sunset. The planting of the rose tree symbolises his total recovery, and he is determined to stand up by himself for the first time in his life before sunset. Likewise, I was also enthusiastic to give students an online activity. I was getting confident in the use of technology-mediated learning and I wanted to share this knowledge with my students. Also, it is a requirement at the institution where I work that all lecturers must involve students in online activities. Despite the fact that I had not thoroughly thought the process through, I was eager for students to engage in this activity, hence I felt that the heading, “go and get it,” described my attitude at that time.

At the end of the second trimester of 2014, my students went on their mid-year vacation from 1 July to 20 July 2014. After the end of the vacation, the first-year students were involved in an on-campus teaching practice period where they were taught the practical aspects of teaching in the classroom.

⁷⁹ “Go and get it, said Colin digging excitedly. Quick! Quick!” (Burnett, 1969, p. 189).

The second- and third-year students went out to schools where, under the guidance and support of experienced teachers who acted as their mentors, they prepared and taught lessons in the classroom.

Unfortunately, when my second- and third-year accounting education students returned to campus on 18 August 2014, I was not able to resume lectures with them because I was given the task of developing the prescribed curriculum for the school of education—and was relieved of my lecturing duties for a period of 8 months starting, 1 August 2014. However, when I began lecturing duties again on 7 April 2015, I pursued my intentions to implement “purposeful pedagogies” (Samaras, 2011, p. 136), one of which was an online activity.

I decided to give a Blackboard online discussion board activity to students. The Blackboard discussion board is a tool for exchanging view and opinions about class materials. The discussion board is made up of forums. Forums are a way of organising a discussion around a topic or a group of related topics called threads. Individual discussion board forums can be linked to any content area, anywhere in the online course but are also centrally located in the discussion board tool on Blackboard (Cornell Academic Technologies, 2014). I decided to give the online activity to second-year and third-year accounting students simultaneously after they returned from the Easter vacation on 7 April 2015 so that they could assist each other. Also, I feared that time would be not be enough if I gave the two cohorts of students the activity at separate times. Now, I reveal how I anticipated that online learning activities could be classified as social constructivist activities.

From my reading, I came to know that in an online learning environment, students could construct their own knowledge (Schell & Janicki, 2013). Despite this, students should not be left to their own devices. They should work under the support and guidance of their instructors as they enhance their cognitive functions and critical thinking skills in finding solutions to given problems (Schell & Janicki, 2013). Moreover, online courses allow students to access information on their course content via the Internet in their own time. This can permit students to control the pace of their learning, which is a feature of constructivist education (Palocsay & Stevens, 2008). In an online learning environment, students can be given more control over the learning process and they can search and discover knowledge by themselves. When discovering knowledge by themselves, they can assign their own interpretations and meanings to the knowledge. This can help them to remember course material better than if they were given notes by the teacher (Brandt, 1997). Bonwell and Eison (1991) argued that students engage more in higher-order thinking skills in an online learning environment. Furthermore, they claimed that in an online course, the construction

of knowledge is shared as students engage with each other. Bonwell and Eison elaborated, further, that students can become more creative and think more critically when they work in groups with their peers in an online environment. These ideas enthused me further to engage students in this online exercise.

On Tuesday, 7 April 2015, I asked students if I could arrange a joint lecture session with second- and third-year students on Thursday 9 April 2015. I told them I would make the arrangements with their other subject lecturers so I could meet all of them after lunch on Thursday at 1:00 pm. On Thursday 9 April 2015 at 1:00 pm, I told them that I had planned a Blackboard discussion board activity for them. I explained to them the notes on the two topics namely, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements Accounting Grades 10–12 (DBE, 2012), and the Distinctive Nature of Accounting (Rossouw, 2002) were uploaded in the Blackboard online classrooms. They had to read these notes and also do some additional research around the two topics. They had to log onto both discussions and engage in the online discussion.

The previous year, the present cohort of accounting third-year students had discussed and debated the curriculum and assessment policy for Grades 10–12. Not only had I anticipated that this would benefit them when they engaged in discussions, but it would provide the present second-year students with assistance in the discussions because the third-year students had a deeper insight into the policy. Both cohorts of students had not had exposure to the distinctive nature of accounting, and I was hoping for their rigorous engagement with this topic. The distinctive nature of accounting refers to the nature of the subject, accounting, which includes the instruction, learning, and evaluation methods. It entails all the ideas about the aims, content, and practitioners of this subject (Rossouw, 2002).

However, students seemed very confused. I had assumed, because they were all familiar with Blackboard, they would know what I was talking about. This was not the case. None of the students, both second-year and third-year, had taken part in an online discussion board activity previously. I had to explain what the discussion board tool was and how it was used. I explained further, that discussion forums were usually conducted asynchronously. Asynchronous communication takes place after intervals. It works like sending an e-mail. The person receiving the message does not have to be on the other end to receive the message immediately and respond right away. They can respond after some time, and discussion board activity is similar. A person can post a comment and someone could read the comment, take some time to formulate a suitable response—and even do

some research—and then provide an informed response at a later stage. This is unlike synchronous communication that requires an immediate response—for example, in a chat room, people's comments to each other are sent immediately as when conversing over the telephone (Cornell Academic Technologies, 2014).

To help students keep track of their activities, thoughts and ideas, I explained how to keep a Blackboard online reflective journal using the Blackboard online journal tool. It was also the first time I had used the discussion board tool and online reflective journal tool, so I had to research these topics on the Internet and then provide students with suitable explanations. I found that Blackboard Journals provided students with a private online diary in which they reflected on an activity and then could write down their thoughts, opinions, and perceptions. This served as a permanent record of their reflections because the online journal could be saved and accessed at a later stage. Only the student and the instructor or lecturer could access this online journal. The Blackboard online reflective journal served as a means to promote critical and reflective thinking amongst students about the online activity (Cornell Academic Technologies, 2014).

All the students were registered users in the Blackboard accounting online classroom because, when they registered for the accounting education module, they were automatically registered into that online classroom. I was the instructor in the online classroom and had the option of assuming any role in the online classroom. Apart from the instructor role, I also took on the role of moderator of the discussions. It was my responsibility as moderator to ensure that the discussions kept to the rules and I monitored student participation. The online activity spanned a period of five weeks and after each step, students had to record their reflections about the week's activities in their Blackboard reflective journal. I explained to students how to create new discussion forums around the content that was already uploaded into their Blackboard online classroom, and assign a name to the forum whilst stating a purpose for the forum.

I promised students that I would be available online and face-to-face to assist them, but I would not be taking part in the actual discussions—merely acting as the moderator. Students could also e-mail me if a matter was urgent. In order to start off the discussions, I created two forums. The first forum dealt with general information about online etiquette and appropriate online behaviour. Also, it provided information on how students could incorporate multimedia resources like a YouTube video clip in their discussions to reduce the monotony of purely text-based interactions. And they could

use the Mashup (Rouse, 2016)⁸⁰ tool to upload images, videos, and slide presentations. In the second forum, I posted a number of leading questions based on the content. I avoided questions that required a yes/no answer but focused on questions that provoked thinking and reflection, and open-ended questions that promoted critical thinking.

Because this was the first online interactive discussion activity I had been exposed to, it was necessary to conduct my own background research in order to guide students. Accordingly, in my reading, I came across Salmon (2002) who had conducted a similar online activity. Salmon indicated that for an online activity to be conducted with a positive end result of students learning something worthwhile, they had to be guided through a well-structured process. Hence, she developed a 5-step model, which provided a framework like a ladder where students acquired knowledge from one step, and then moved up the ladder to another step—and built on their acquired knowledge at each step (Salmon, 2002). I felt that this 5-step model was most pertinent to the social constructivist approach because students could build on their previous knowledge as they moved through the different steps of the online activity. I therefore adopted this 5-step model and adjusted it to suit my activity in the following way:

- **Step 1: Getting online**

Students had to log into the online classroom and establish their identities. They were told that the discussion board tool would not allow them to enter a discussion before they had first posted a comment.

- **Step 2: Online socialisation**

Once they had successfully logged in, students had to form online groups of six to engage in meaningful discussion. They were told that they could use my questions to start but they had to start their own forums once discussion got under way. Students were made aware that they were not restricted to discussions within their group, but they could respond to a comment or suggestion from other groups. However, I wanted to see evidence of rigorous discussion in the groups and between groups.

- **Step 3: Online interaction**

In this step, there was to be mutual exchange of ideas and information. They should be doing some research in their own time, read the content uploaded in the classroom, and engage in deliberate discussions. If need be, they could start new forums.

⁸⁰ Mashup is a web application that uses content from different sources and combines them to develop one document for example including a video clip or an animated cartoon in the document.

- **Step 4: Knowledge construction**

By the time they reached this step, all technical problems—for example, logging in problems and access—should have been resolved and students should be engaged in course-related group discussion. The interaction should become more collaborative with ideas being exchanged and new knowledge being developed. Students should not only be engaged in debate but the discussion should allow for reflective critical thinking. New ideas should be developed and debated. Basically, this step was about opening a discussion on a topic, seeking information, building knowledge, exchanging knowledge, and then finally closing down on a topic.

- **Step 5: Development**

At this stage, the online interaction between students and between groups should not be as robust because conclusions should be drawn, agreement reached on new ideas, and new knowledge created. This step dealt with both personal development and the development of others. It was about gaining self-insight, reflecting, and making judgments.

I explained to students this activity was going to span five weeks. It had to be done in their own time, not during the normal lecture time and, most significant of all, it was not going to be graded—and no marks would be going towards their DP marks. This created such a furore amongst students that when they confronted me, I experienced feelings of anxiety and nervousness. One student asked a question about the activity not being graded and before I could answer, I was bombarded with students complaining that this activity was a waste of time if it was not for marks. Soon, almost the whole class was in an uproar about the activity not being graded and that they had to do it outside of lecture time.

Nevertheless, I had to gain my composure and was determined to bring the situation under control. As the title of this section indicated, I felt that I needed some magic. Although the situation calmed down, I was thrown off balance. Later, when I read the students' reflections in their Blackboard journals, I found similar comments. As the moderator in the online classroom, I had access to the entire online discussion. I had asked students' permission prior to the activity to read their postings. I extracted these comments directly from the students' Blackboard online discussion so they were not edited. Some of the comments were:

This activity is gonna t take a long tim, if it was for marks I will do it but just do it for the sak of doing it, Im wasting time.

Why should we waste our time doing this activity when not for marks, we need a DP mark and we can do other assessments where we get marks.

I live in a rural area near Greytown. There is only one high school in my area where there is still no electricity. They drink water out the tank. How am I going to benefit from this activity when the learners have never worked on a computer.

(Students' online reflective journals, 14 April 2015)

When using Blackboard, the online discussion postings are automatically saved and can be accessed repeatedly at a later stage. The students made some postings that I regarded as being important because I had not anticipated that they would react in this manner. Also, I could see a correlation between these comments and the comments students had made in their reflective journals. This was significant because it helped me make sense of how my attempt at transforming my teaching approach to one of social constructivism was not going to be an easy task. Some of the students' postings said:

I joined this discussion late because I could not access the classroom, I am lost. Can someone fill me in on what this group is talking about.

Hey I feel so lost can somebody help me.

No marks guys, what do you think.

I feel just like you do, I think we were wasting time but I am not enjoying this now"

Mrs H [that is me] said this activity will develop us in using the online classroom, I don't know about this, lots of work"

(Students' Blackboard discussions, 15 April 2015)

Later, I returned to the peaceful sanctity of my office and reflected on the incident that occurred during my lecture.

I feel like a tightrope walker, teetering on the edge where I could fall off at any moment. I had planned this activity with the confident thought that all students would enthusiastically participate but now I am feeling very insecure because I am worried that students will not do this activity. But also besides this fear, I am determined that I am going to make students enjoy the activity. I think they are also scared because this is something new. I will reassure them

that they have the ability to take part in something even if it is not for marks. I want students to enjoy my lessons not hate my class—then they will hate me. No, I am going to change their mind-sets. I did it before; I am going to do it again. (Personal journal, Monday, 15 April 2015)

After I had written this monologue, I felt slightly more relaxed but also determined at the same time that I was going to win my students over with my magic. I tried to find a word to describe what had happened in my lecture room and decided to relax my mind and thoughts and read some self-study research literature. While reading, I came across Tidwell and Fitzgerald (2006) who helped me make sense of the experience I'd had in my class with students. They described such an experience as a *nodal moment* that occurred in my classroom. They added, further, that the experience was so profound that it had a lasting impression. Furthermore, they claimed that if a person who had experienced a nodal moment carefully examined the critical moment, it would help make sense of the meaning behind their practice. Hodge and Anderson (2007) described how nodal moments encouraged them to review their practices, rethink ways in which students were learning, and investigate the introduction of technology in their teaching and the resultant effect on the teaching and learning that was occurring in their classrooms. I read further, that using drawing to portray your personal perception of events that occurred during an instructional or nodal moment could give you better insight into what actually happened (Richardson, 1998 as cited in Tidwell & Fitzgerald, 2006). I also learned that by re-representing the experience of the nodal moment by drawing it, I could analyse the drawing and get a deeper, richer perspective on the nodal moment (Knupfer, 1994). Moreover, using the actual drawing as data, especially when breaking down each event into little bits and analysing each bit, could give me a deeper understanding of my practice (Tidwell & Manke, 2009). Hence, I decided that I wanted to find a metaphor that best depicted how I felt at the time of the nodal moment.

Since I had felt fear combined with feelings of insecurity and loneliness, I felt like a tightrope walker. I could not actually draw a tightrope walker because at that moment I was flustered about the events that occurred during the nodal moment—so I looked on the Internet for pictures that inspired me to represent myself as a tightrope walker. I came across a very suitable image from (Businessman with briefcase on tightrope, n. d.) that suited my purposes most aptly. I adapted the idea from this site and I drew a picture of a tightrope walker clutching his briefcase (Figure 9.1).



Figure 9.1 Metaphor drawing of tightrope walker (Adapted from Businessman with briefcase on tightrope)

Analysing what I included in the drawing proved to be very helpful in thinking reflectively about my practice. When I looked at the tightrope walker in the drawing, I could see myself, all confident and sure of myself striding along and even holding a briefcase. This is how I felt before the online activity. I was certain that all students would participate willingly, even if the activity was not for marks, because I was convinced in my practice that I was the expert and anything I did students would go along with. I did not consider students' obsession with marks and I overestimated their desire to participate in an online activity for personal development. It seemed from their reaction and the events during the nodal moment, that students were keenly interested in acquiring a DP mark. I was extremely disappointed—firstly in myself for not having considered this and secondly with my students for behaving this way.

If the tightrope walker panicked and became shaky, he could fall and the image shows that he was high in the sky—if he fell off he could die because there were no safety ropes, net, or harness to catch him. Like the tightrope walker, I alone had to deal with this situation. If I panicked, I could fall and the entire exercise of trying something new would be lost. It took all my courage, strength, and composure to bring the situation back to equilibrium. However, when I spoke my voice sounded nervous and I was hoping the students would not notice.

The tightrope walker was holding onto a briefcase. My perspective on this was that he had something valuable inside and, no matter what, he was not letting go. He was determined to hold onto the briefcase even if it meant falling. To me, the holding of the briefcase was depicting my strength, courage, resilience, and determination to succeed even if I fell—because I would use the briefcase to break my fall. I would get up again and try again, no matter what the consequences. This became apparent during the nodal moment when I panicked, but I did not let students see I was panicked. I felt much calmer after I recorded my reflections in my journal.

I am a very positive person and I have developed faith in my students. I am not going to let this get me down. I am taking a personal stance that I am going to somehow change my students' way of thinking. Like the tightrope walker, I am going to be courageous and, no matter what the risk, I am going to attempt to walk across my tightrope. But should I be focusing on changing my students' way of thinking or mine? This has given me food for thought. (Personal journal, Friday 30 May 2015)

9.3 Look at Me⁸¹

The words, “Look at me,” are spoken by Colin in *The Secret Garden* when he commands everyone to look at him when he stands on his own two feet in the garden for the first time. He is determined not to give in. His courage and determination had changed his entire outlook, which also impacted on his appearance. I also felt this determination and strength in response to the nodal moment that occurred in my teacher educator practice. Whilst these thoughts were going through my mind, a nagging thought kept coming into my mind, “Should I be focusing on changing my students' way of thinking or mine?”

This thought led me to believe that at this critical point in the self-study of my educational practice, I needed a fresh and broader perspective. An opportunity presented itself at that point—the university where I was registered as a doctoral student was hosting a national university teaching and learning conference. I decided to submit my work to this conference as work in progress, not only to gain the experience of participating in a national conference but also to get conference attendees' perspectives on my pedagogic practice. I submitted an abstract based on this online activity to the conference in 2015. In so doing, I was also following the advice of Bullough and

⁸¹ ““Look at me,” said, Colin, ‘I am standing by myself’” (Burnett, 1969, p. 198).

Pinnegar (2004) who suggested that, although self-study was about studying yourself, when you engage in scholarly discussions with others, you get to see your work from others' viewpoints and, thereby, gain a deeper understanding of yourself. Mitchell, Weber, and Pithouse (2009) agreed that by making your work public, self-study research allowed you to gain a much broader view. After my abstract was accepted, I had to submit my completed paper for blind peer review. The reviewers provided the following reports.

Reviewer 1: The paper does contribute new knowledge in the teaching of accounting. E-learning is regarded as a powerful form of learning in the 21st century; engaging student teachers with online discussion provides them with new methodologies of teaching, which they can employ in their classroom. Also, as future teachers that learning is generated through discussions. However, the author needs to engage with more literature to make the audience understand how Blackboard works and why it is an important tool to use for this study among other tools. As a reader, I am struggling to make connections between her rationale and the methodology. Reading the rationale, I had an impression that the study is about bridging the gap between student-teacher content knowledge of accounting and pedagogies to teach. I suggest the rationale to be revisited. The author focuses on using metaphors to explain her emotions instead of explaining how the metaphors helped her develop responsive and innovative pedagogies. In the analysis, some extract of students' journals need to be attached and analysed to justify the points made in conclusion, e.g., it was an enjoyable experience for students. The conclusion must be informed by the discussion.

On reading this report, I was pleased by the reviewer's comment that the paper contributed to new knowledge in the teaching of accounting and that the reviewer acknowledged that e-learning was important in the 21st century for student teachers. I looked at the paper again and realised that I did not provide sufficient information on Blackboard. I went online to the Blackboard support website (Cornell Academic Technologies, 2014) where there was a wealth of information on the Blackboard discussion tool. The website even had videos, which I watched. This gave me more insight, which I added to the revised paper. By doing this, I acquired much more knowledge than I had from my own training in Blackboard and I was excited because, apart from including the information in my paper, I could use the information to teach my students. The greatest advantage was that I did not have to seek permission for intellectual property rights because the information was already in the public domain, which meant I could provide a hyperlink to the website in my Blackboard online classroom for students to access.

When I relooked at my rationale, I agreed with the reviewer that there was no connection between what I had said in the rationale and the methodology I used. I consulted various self-study research books, such as *Research Methods in Education* (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013), on how to phrase my rationale so that there was a link between the rationale and the methodology employed. This contributed greatly to not only this article but also to my doctoral studies. My paper was titled, "Using Metaphors to Develop Responsive and Innovative Pedagogies." However, as the reviewer

so rightly pointed out, I was explaining more about my emotions and feelings rather than showing how the metaphors helped me to develop innovative pedagogies.

By focusing on what the reviewer said, I became aware that it was very important to concentrate on the main purpose of the research and not get sidetracked by other issues. While my self-study research dealt a lot with personal emotions and feelings, it had to be discussed in the right context and at the right time. The reviewer pointed out that I did not include any extracts from students' reflective journals or the online discussion. So I reread the students' online reflective journals as well as the postings made during the online discussion. I was pleasantly surprised how much valuable information was there, which could add so much more credibility and trustworthiness to not only this article, but to my doctoral research as well. I chose some of the reflections and the postings and included them in my revised paper.

<p>Reviewer 2: This is an interesting snapshot into teacher educator development. I found some of this work difficult to understand because the grammar, tense and sentence construction in some cases were unclear and compromised the coherence of the paper. Perhaps explain the results more clearly—why were you fearful that students could go on a rampage—do you think the newness of the task made them unable to cope? I wonder whether your claim about students' obsession with marks is fair—please provide the evidence which suggests this.</p>

When I read the first line of this review, I was pleased because I quite liked the words, “interesting snapshot into teacher educator development.” It made me think of myself as an artist taking snapshots of my classroom practice. When I reflected on this, I thought that was exactly what I was doing with self-study research. I was taking small snapshots of my teaching experiences, reflecting on them, and finding reasons why I did things the way I did and finding better ways of doing these things. However, as I read on I became extremely cross with myself because I usually pride myself on my ability to write grammatically correct language with correct tense and sentence construction. I was initially irritated with the reviewer for saying this. But when I read my paper again, the poor tense and grammar errors were so blatant that I was embarrassed I could have made those errors. I immediately corrected these but it made me wary and careful about future writing. I have become extra careful now and I reread my writing many times over. I have developed a habit of asking not only my critical friends to read through my writing but other people who are not in the teaching profession to read my work. Sometimes it does well to get a totally independent person to read your work because they tend to read with an open mind.

However, I was not in agreement with the reviewer about the fairness of claiming that students were obsessed with marks. I thought my article did provide this evidence. The fact that students confronted me about not grading the activity in my opinion showed their obsession with marks. This was a contentious comment and it was discussed at length when I made my presentation at the conference.

I made the necessary changes according to the reviewers' suggestions and recommendations and I submitted a revised paper to the conference organisers. At the conference, I presented my paper and engaged with the conference attendees as my critical friends. I refer to the conference attendees as my critical friends because Costa and Kallick (1993, p. 50) defined critical friends as "trusted persons" who asked thought-provoking questions and, thereby, helped you to see your work from different perspectives. They also offer constructive criticism of your work. Schuck and Russell (2005) claimed that critical friends were a key component in self-study research for a number of reasons. For instance, critical friends can view your work from an outsider perspective and, thus, encourage you to step out of your comfort zone regarding your work. This occurs when they ask you provocative questions about your research. Fuentealba and Russell (2016) offered a fresh viewpoint on critical friends by suggesting that when they engage in conversations with you about your work, critical friends acted as co-constructors of knowledge.

In this regard, I wanted to capture every moment of the conference presentation and the discussion thereafter. I asked the conference attendees' permission to video and audio record my session and permission was given. I explained it was understood that the recording would be later transcribed and used as research data for my doctoral thesis. After I presented my paper at the conference, a discussion took place and is presented in the vignette below.

Vignette: Discussion after my presentation at the Teaching and Learning Conference

The first comment from one of the attendees was very positive. He stated that he liked the semi-story style of the paper and found it interesting. However, he was perturbed by the fact that students only wanted to do things that have DP outcomes. He stated, further, that it was not as if I had some ill intention in giving them this online activity. It was not possible to reflect on this comment during the discussion but later, when transcribing the post presentation discussion, I recorded my reflections in my journal. Needless to say, another comment from a conference attendee made me think differently about the activity not being graded. The comment made was:

What you are asking them to do is engage on a level where they actually have to engage with the material on an interactive basis and I think it is incredibly important and instead of being castigated for that you should be lauded.

This comment captured exactly what I had intended by giving students that activity. I felt elated that some other learned person could so thoroughly and eloquently capture my thoughts and actions and voice them so profoundly. I changed my mind about having guilty feelings for not grading this activity because, as was pointed out, what I was doing with students was encouraging them to actively engage with the materials instead of reading from a textbook. I felt good that the critical friend said I should be lauded instead of being castigated. It made me feel that this activity was not a waste of students' time and effort.

A question from another conference attendee got me thinking, and I could not provide an immediate answer to this question because I needed to sit down and carefully reflect on the issue. I was asked why I had chosen a metaphor drawing approach. When this question was posed to me, I could not answer it immediately because I did not know what to say. I thought about it for a moment and answered by saying that I thought it evoked deeper meaning. Unfortunately, she was not convinced and probed me further. I answered in what I thought was the best way possible. I stated that as part of my doctoral thesis I was using an arts-based approach, especially metaphor and metaphor drawings. However, my critical friend was not accepting that answer. At that point, I must honestly admit I was becoming very frustrated and at my wits' end because, frankly, I did not know what kind of answer she was looking for. Truthfully, at that point I did not know what to say. So, I said that I chose metaphor drawings for no apparent reason.

Interestingly, the last question posed, while sounding like a joke because it got people chuckling, was a question that I considered most valuable to my reflective process. I was asked why I drew a man in a suit. Did I believe that knowledge rested with a man in a suit? Although I could not answer the question at that time, when transcribing the audio recording of the discussion, I thought about this question. When choosing the metaphor drawing to represent my nodal moment, not for a moment did I consider drawing myself walking on a tightrope holding a briefcase. As was stated by the person who asked me this question, it was my nodal moment and I had the experience. Why did I not draw myself as a woman? I pondered on this question for a long time and came to the realisation that I did probably believe that knowledge rested with a man. This self-revelation came as a surprise because I am an independent, powerful, and liberated woman with very strong beliefs about female empowerment and gender discrimination. It dawned on me that there was an apparent "living contradiction" not only in my teaching practice but also in my personal beliefs and values. I did not know whether I was correct in initially claiming that I felt I was reprimanded for saying that students' were

obsessed with marks because the extract from students' online reflective journal, postings from their online discussions, and the events of the nodal moment that took place were evidence enough that students were very worried that their time was being wasted because the activity was purely for development and not for marks. On thinking carefully about the peer reviewer's comments, I thought that maybe I should not have said that students were obsessed with marks. Maybe I could have said that students were worried because they had to have a year mark called a DP (due performance) mark to sit for the examinations and this 5-week activity was not being graded. I seriously felt guilty about not grading the activity but I thought it would have been unfair to grade them because they were not familiar with online discussions. I wanted them to first enjoy the activity and develop their skills in online discussions and when they were comfortable with it, I could grade them. I was having very nagging thoughts that maybe I had erred but, as the comment said, I "did not have any ill intention to waste their time." (Personal journal, Wednesday, 23 September 2015)

9.4 I Shall Walk Back With You Father—To the House⁸²

The words, "I shall walk back with you Father—to the house," are spoken in the last chapter of *The Secret Garden* by Colin to his father. His father, Archibald Craven is still in shock after seeing a transformed Colin. The last time he had seen Colin, he was asleep in his bed in the middle of the night, looking sick and frail. Now he sees this "laughable, lovable, healthy human thing" (Burnett, 1969, p. 241) striding towards him. He is shocked speechless but becomes tearful when he hears Colin say, "I am never going to get into that wheelchair again" (Burnett, 1969, p. 241). Similarly, I had a surge of energy and spirit and promised myself that, despite the nodal moment I had experienced as narrated in this chapter, I was never going to give up. I began the chapter with a poem where Colin was beseeching everyone to notice that he was not a hunchback nor did he have crooked legs. After my nodal moment experience, I also wanted to cry out, "I am not a failure!" On the contrary, I have learned many lessons from my nodal experience. For example, I had to work hard to change the mind-set of my students—not every activity was for marks. From critical friends at the conference, I learned that trying our new pedagogies was not harming my students but, rather, creating exciting opportunities for them to learn and grow. However, I must never take my students for granted again but always discuss with them, first, concerning any activity I want to give them. I also learned that next time, I could be more reflexive about the drawings I create to represent my lived experiences.

⁸² "I shall walk back with you Father—to the house" (Burnett, 1969, p. 241).

In this chapter, I narrated my pedagogic journey for the second trimester of 2015, commencing on 7 April 2015. In my endeavour to enact more “purposeful pedagogies” (Samaras, 2011, p. 136), I involved my second- and third-year accounting pedagogy students in an online Blackboard activity that was spread over 5 weeks. I sought permission from students to read their Blackboard discussions as well as their online Blackboard reflective journals, and use these conversations and reflections as data for my study. I transcribed these online conversations and reflections and reflected on them together with my reflections. I described a significant moment that occurred during my teaching activity when my students confronted me about the online activity not being graded. I referred to this moment as a nodal moment and I chose a metaphor to describe the nodal moment, which I represented in a metaphor drawing.

In addition, I narrated how I developed the metaphor drawing into a journal paper and submitted the paper to a teaching and learning conference. I reported on my reflections on the feedback I received from a blind peer review of my conference paper, and included my reflections on the review. I audio- and video-recorded my paper presentation at the conference—as well as the subsequent conversations and comments about my paper from conference attendees whom I called my critical friends. I reflected on the discussions during my presentation and also reflected on the dialogue that ensued.

In the next chapter, I provide a review of the thesis. I then present the three collage portraits that I developed to respond to my research questions and narrate my learning from an analysis of the collage portraits. Next, I narrate the development of my living educational theory and follow this with my methodological learning. I conclude the chapter by discussing what contribution this thesis would make to those who may want to pursue a study of this nature, and to other teacher educators in the field of accounting pedagogy.

CHAPTER TEN: IN THE GARDEN⁸³

*New things people found
As powerful as batteries
Thoughts—mere thoughts are⁸⁴*

10.1 Take Me Into the Garden and Tell Me all About It⁸⁵

My doctoral research journey, exploring my role modelling as a teacher educator of accounting pedagogy, is complete. The title I gave to this final chapter of this thesis is the same as the final chapter in the novel, *The Secret Garden*. The garden is the place where everything changes and new life begins. Mary is transformed, Colin is healed, and Dickon has forged new relationships. Hence, I chose this title because the garden symbolises my transformation in my role modelling.

I commenced this thesis with a haiku, and I end with a haiku. I extracted the words for this poem from the final chapter in *The Secret Garden*. The comments are made by Dickon's wise mother who sent a letter to Archibald Craven, Colin's father, appealing to him to come home from his travels, immediately, to see Colin's transformation. I repeat the haiku and explain what each line means to me:

*New things people found
As powerful as batteries
Thoughts—mere thoughts are*

My purpose in undertaking this self-study was to align my pedagogic practice with my educational values so that I could transform myself and, consequently, my practice in order to develop as a more productive role model for my students. Hence, the first line of the haiku relates to all the new things that I found I was capable of achieving in my practice when I adopted purposeful pedagogies from a social constructivist perspective. The second line is indicative of my powerful self who managed to transform my role modelling and grow and develop towards becoming a more productive role model for my students in accounting pedagogy. The last line refers to my thoughts and my positive attitude because, in order to transform, grow, and develop as a more productive role model, I had to use my thinking to bring my educational values to life in my pedagogic practice.

⁸³ "In The Garden" (Burnett, 1969, p. 229).

⁸⁴ "One of the new things people began to find out this century was that thoughts—just mere thoughts—are as powerful as electric batteries" (Burnett, 1969, p. 229).

⁸⁵ "Take me into the garden, my boy," he said at last, 'and tell me all about it' (Burnett, 1969, p. 240).

The title I gave to this section, “Take Me Into the Garden and Tell Me all About It,” reminds me of how, through my self-study of educational practice and the inspiration of my favourite paragraph from *The Secret Garden* (see Chapter One, Footnote 2) upon which my study revolved, the astounding thing that was brought to light was that I was never the perfect teacher educator of accounting pedagogy that I had thought I was. At first, I refused to believe this, but then a strange new thing was found—a living contradiction between my educational values and my pedagogical activities. I delved deep into my inner self and my lived experiences. I consulted my students and my critical friends. I confronted the discoveries that emerged about me, and I gained deep self-knowledge that aided me in my ongoing transformation towards becoming a more productive role model for my students.

In this chapter, I offer a synthesis of this thesis, a linking together of various threads. I provide an overall review of the thesis by explaining what was covered in each chapter. Next, I offer my learning as portrayed in the three collage portraits I developed (as discussed in Chapter Two). This is followed by a rendition of my living educational theory (Whitehead, 1989) and I explain what I hope to do differently in the future as a consequence of this study. Next, I focus on my methodological learning where I reflect on my chosen methodology and research practices. I end by reflecting on what this thesis could offer to others who are interested in self-study research, to other teacher educators of accounting pedagogy, and to other university educators.

10.2 It Was the Garden That Did It⁸⁶

I used these words, “It was the garden that did it,” from *The Secret Garden* as a heading for this section. Colin, Mary, and Dickon believe that there is magic in the secret garden and this magic has helped them to transform. Had it not been for the secret garden, Colin might still be confined to his wheelchair, Mary would have remained the sullen and rude child she had been, and Dickon would never have developed good friendships. I also had faith in the magical powers in the garden and took my strength and spirit from this power. Just as Colin exclaimed that “it was the garden that did it,” so I too felt that *The Secret Garden* has given me the strength and power to complete this thesis. Now, I provide a review of the thesis.

In Chapter One, I introduced the novel, *The Secret Garden*, as a creative nonfiction device for constructing this thesis. I emphasised how the storyline and the fictional life experiences of the

⁸⁶ “It was the garden that did it, said Colin” (Burnett, 1969, p. 240).

protagonist, Mary Lennox, resonated with my own lived experiences. I described the context in which the study took place, and then clarified the focus and purpose of embarking on this self-study as well as the rationale for undertaking the study. I then showed how I constructed my three research questions and how I responded to each question. I illuminated my understanding of the theoretical perspective of social constructivism that informed this study. I described the key concepts that emerged from the study from a social constructivist perspective. I also explained how I came to understand that there was a living contradiction in my pedagogical practice where my educational values did not play out in my pedagogical practice. Once I came to terms with this realisation, then only did I begin the process of transforming my role modelling as a teacher educator of accounting pedagogy by developing my living educational theory. From my reading (Whitehead, 1989), I came to understand that when teacher educators understand that there is a living contradiction in their pedagogical practice, they seek alternate ways of enacting purposeful pedagogies (Samaras, 2011) in an attempt to align their educational values with their pedagogic activities. These alternate pedagogies become their living educational theories because these theories are not derived from some discipline of education but are constructed from their own ideas of improving their practice.

In Chapter Two, I identified the research methodology I adopted in this study. This was followed by the location of the study. I then described my research participants. Thereafter, I explained who my critical friends were, and their contribution to my study. Next, I identified and described each research practice that I used to generate, represent, and analyse data for the study. I gave reasons for choosing each practice and showed how it helped me respond to my research questions. Ethical issues were then elucidated, followed by how I aimed to achieve trustworthiness for my research methodology. I then narrated the challenges I faced while conducting this research study. On completing Chapter Two, I had more insight into the self-study methodological approach I chose to undertake the study. I had articulated my first learnings about self-study research and how I had gained a broader, more in-depth understanding of personal history and arts-based self-study.

In Chapter Three, I narrated my childhood experiences from when I was born. I explained how my mother, my sister, and I had to relocate to another town when my father died and the struggles and hardships my mother endured in order to support and provide for us. I also spoke about the bittersweet experiences we faced whilst living with my grandparents. I described how my grandmother told us stories from the Hindu holy books, and other stories with a moral significance, while we sat near the coal stove. From the personal history narrative I wrote in this chapter, I learned that the beliefs I formed in my childhood were governed by my experiences and that it is these

beliefs about myself that influence my role modelling as a teacher educator of accounting pedagogy. Writing my personal history narrative and delving into my childhood experiences made me more conscious of these beliefs. My greatest realisation was that I could change these beliefs because being aware of them, and how they influenced my development, acted like a catalyst for me to begin the process of transforming my role modelling.

In Chapter Four, I highlighted my unhappy experiences as a primary school learner and the humiliation I suffered after being labelled an ugly duckling by my grandfather. In addition, I revealed the harsh treatment I received from a teacher at school and the many insults I got for not being able to sew properly. In this chapter, I also attempted to show how those experiences influenced my role modelling. The key message that this chapter had for me was that my past will always walk alongside me in the present, and I will carry my past into the future. Certain experiences will always haunt me and bring me back to my past, but I realised that I am the master of my own destiny and I have a choice of embracing the past, no matter how bad it was, and can treat the past as a springboard to leap into the future.

In Chapter Five, I showed how I found my true worth as a high school learner because of the kindness and warm attitude of my English teacher who saw my potential and my love for the languages. I described how my high school years began very pleasantly, but did not end well because of the insistence by my mother to change my direction of study. I wanted to study music but my mother wanted me to become a nurse and I was very unhappy—so much so that I lost interest in school and did not gain a university entrance pass. However, I repeated my matric year, which was my stepping stone to success. Writing this chapter was indeed an emotional seesaw for me because I experienced moments of great sadness when I relived certain experiences that had been awakened, interspersed with moments of bliss and joy. However, as I am maturing with life experiences, I am letting go of the past through forgiveness and understanding, and moving into the future with a clean slate towards the transformation of my role modelling.

In Chapter Six, I narrated my various experiences of becoming a student radiographer, a mother and housewife, a part-time lecturer at a technical college, then a college of education lecturer, a high school teacher and, finally, a teacher educator. I show how I learned from each lived experience and how these experiences impacted on my development as a teacher educator. Reliving my past experiences has made me realise that the only way I can move forward into the future is by drawing on the memories of the past. However, I have made a conscious decision not to let my past

experiences dampen the brightness of the possibilities of a future of becoming a more productive role model for my students.

In Chapter Seven, I described my teaching experiences, discussions with my critical friends and colleagues, and dialogue with my students for the first trimester of 2014. This chapter chronicled the beginning of my transformation process as I started to role model “purposeful pedagogies (Samaras, 2011, p. 136) in the form of a social constructivist approach in my teaching. I included reflections from my reflective journal on my teaching experiences, discussions with my colleagues and critical friends, and dialogue with my students, which I represented using vignettes and written narratives. I also showed how I became more consciously aware that, in order to improve my practice by transforming my role modelling, I needed to role model actions and behaviours that indicated my educational values were being played out in my teaching activities. Hence, I involved my students in a debate, followed by an activity where they had to watch videos and DVDs on teaching media and teaching resources. Students planned and executed a show with the theme of teaching media and teaching resources. I ended the first trimester by involving students in a reflective activity where they had to choose and draw a metaphor of me as their teacher educator. Writing this chapter has given me a better understanding of my role modelling as a teacher educator of accounting pedagogy. For the very first time in my teaching career, I am seeing myself through the eyes of my students and my critical friends. This has proven to be a very enlightening experience because my personal view of myself has been deconstructed to allow a reenvisioning of my professional self. I have learned that, whilst my students are enjoying the freedom that I am giving them to learn, and recognising their voices in the decisions that impact on their professional development, they still highly value my contribution and my guidance in the classroom.

In Chapter Eight, I highlighted my role modelling for the second trimester of 2014, commencing on 14 April and ending on 30 June 2014. I showed how I engaged students in an oral storytelling session, followed by how I responded to students’ request that I adopt a combination of student-centred and teacher-centred teaching strategies. I demonstrated how I then reacted to this request by giving students two journal articles to read and analyse. Unfortunately, students experienced many problems with this activity and I demonstrated how I involved the writing centre and the student academic development unit to come to my class and assist my students. This was followed by an activity that required students to peer teach followed by a debate. I concluded the teaching for the second trimester of 2014 by getting second- and third-year students to teach the first-year students. I asked the first-year students to provide comments and their reflections about the teaching session

with second- and third-year students. At the end of writing this chapter, it became more apparent to me that my students might still find difficulty taking responsibility for their own learning. Although reflecting on my purposeful pedagogies revealed that students are enjoying the excitement of my new innovative teaching approaches, changing their mind-set is not a process that will occur in haste. My reinvention (Mitchell & Weber, 1999) of my role modelling needs to be gradual and slow and the impact on my students will follow suit.

In Chapter Nine, I discussed how I involved students in a 5-week online discussion board activity in an attempt to enact purposeful pedagogies. I asked students to keep a reflective journal to record their reflections on the online activity. I also kept a journal where I recorded my reflections on the online activity. I experienced a critical moment during the activity and found a metaphor to represent the critical moment. I developed the activity into a conference paper, which I presented at a teaching and learning conference. I recorded my reflections on the blind peer review of the conference paper and the feedback I received at the conference. From the conference, I learned that I should not be too harsh on myself for enacting purposeful pedagogies in the form of online activities because technology mediated learning, apart from being a requirement of the institution where I work, gives students an opportunity to experience an interactive style of teaching that they would not be able to experience from a textbook. I also learned that, when I construct metaphor drawings, I should be more wary that the drawing represents me as the main participant in the research process and not some other abstract being. Furthermore, I was so used to role modelling behaviours that instruct my students instead of facilitating their learning, I overestimated my persuasive abilities to get students to do everything I instructed them to do. I found that role modelling purposeful pedagogies from a social constructivist perspective was impacting on students' learning. They had learnt to have a voice in decisions regarding their learning. However, I learned that students are still concerned with marks and so I need to involve them in decision making to allay their fears. In the next section, I include the three collage portraits I developed to answer my three research questions, and I narrate what I learned from the collages.

10.3 What Is It . . . I Almost Feel as if I Were Alive⁸⁷

Colin asks this question in *The Secret Garden* because he is so shocked at his own transformation, that he cannot believe it. Similarly, creating and reflecting on collage portraits to convey my learning in

⁸⁷ "What is it, he said. Almost in a whisper, and he passed his hand over his forehead. I almost feel as if—I were alive!" (Burnett, 1969, p. 232).

response to each of my research questions, revealed a lot about me and my role modelling (as discussed in Chapter Two).

My First Collage Portrait

I developed this first collage portrait to portray my learning in response to my first research question on what could have influenced my role modelling as a teacher educator of accounting pedagogy (see Figure 2.5). The collage portrait represents the different phases in my personal history, which I believe influenced how I role modelled. As a young child, after my father died, I was thrown into circumstances that were out of my control. My father's untimely demise itself influenced the identity I moulded for myself—a lost, desolate, and abandoned child. Every child seeks protection and security from her or his parents. Unfortunately, I did not get the security or protection that I so desired. I did not get to know my father and, after my father died, my mother had a difficult time coping with his loss and having to cope with two young children. Her situation was exacerbated by the fact she was removed from her home and had no source of income (see Chapter Three). As young as I was, I see now that this impacted on me heavily. For example, I made myself feel better despite having been born a sick child because I did not want to further burden my mother. I have come to realise now that I literally burdened myself with the responsibility of caring for my sister and myself. I remember, as a teenager, I would dress like a boy and pick fights with boys because I wanted to take on the role of being a father and protect my sister and myself.

I can see now how this desire to be in charge and control manifested into my primary school years. I hated needlework because needlework required creativity. Although you can use a pattern to create a product, you can also use your creativity in making the item more appealing. I did not want to do anything that involved creativity because I saw my future with blinkers. I did not want anything to cause me to digress from the straight path to success I saw ahead of me. However, I realised when I went to high school, that somewhere inside me lurked a desire to be creative and spontaneous, and this projected itself in my ability with the languages, writing my own plays, and acting out the plays. I realise now that I must have been born a creative person but my childhood experiences dampened this creativity.

Also, I can see now, as a child I was always afraid of putting any added pressure on my mother. Although I yearned for my mother to stay at home and care for us, secretly I was happy when she went to work in another town because I felt guilty seeing her working three jobs and selling clothing and linen on her days off. When she was away from me, I relaxed because I did not feel so guilty. This was a big burden for a young child to carry and when my mother asked me to pursue a career

in the medical field, I obliged although it was not my forte, because I did not want to burden her or disobey her. I still feel that way and that is why I think I gave my mother the same status as the novel, *The Secret Garden*, and pasted a photograph of her in the centre of my personal collage portrait.

I did not realise at that time because I was too young to analyse my childhood, but now it has dawned on me that wanting to take charge of our lives and to protect us, was a burden I carried with me throughout my life. It manifested itself in the teacher educator I became because I always wanted to be in control of every situation. In class with my students, I always took charge and controlled their every action. Students noticed I was very rigid in the way I approached my teaching. Everything had to be in order and presented in an orderly fashion. I realise now that although I qualified as an English teacher, when I was asked to teach accounting, it appealed to me. Accounting is a very procedural subject and I took this as a cue that I must teach in a very disciplined manner. I took much joy in ruling straight columns and entering figures and, when the figures balanced, I got a secret thrill that everything was okay in my organised world. I never allowed my students to transgress in any way. If their work was not presented in an organised manner, I would deduct marks. If students presented a lesson, I was absolutely rigid in how I wanted them to present the lesson. If they did anything that was out of the ordinary, I would severely penalise them.

My Second Collage Portrait

I developed this second collage portrait to convey my learning in response to my second research question on what I role model for my students as a teacher educator of accounting pedagogy (see Figure 2.6).

The data I generated with my students and my critical friends revealed I was role modelling for my students from two ends of a continuum. There was no middle ground with me. Students stated I was extremely fast-paced in my teaching, for example, in their explanations of the Ferrari and aeroplane metaphors. I came to see how influences from my childhood infiltrated my role modelling as a teacher educator.

Students who said I was like an aeroplane, also indicated that despite the fact I was very fast, I did not waste time. I covered a lot of content in one lesson. This had positive and negative impacts on students. The positive was that students had the content covered but they had to take time out on their own to digest and internalise it. When discussing the Ferrari metaphor drawing, students also stated that sometimes they got left behind because I moved too fast. My childhood desire to be in

control is evident in my role modelling because students said in their explanation of the Ferrari metaphor that I am like the Ferrari—when you start up a Ferrari, you immediately hear the power. But they also said that I did not ask questions or that I answer my own questions. Through explaining my personal history, I have come to see how this stems from my desire to be in control and not to burden others. I felt I should do everything for my students and that, by asking answers of them, I would be burdening them. Also, perhaps, I felt my answers were the only correct answers and their answers did not matter.

My critical friend, Mr. C, drew me as a fox and explained that when you go against a fox, it will bite you. He said if someone does not agree with me, I can get very vicious like a fox. Once again, I came to see how my childhood desire to be in control manifested itself in my interactions with others. I felt that my way was the best way. I felt extremely vulnerable when my critical friends told me this about myself but I came to realise that in self-study, vulnerability and feelings of insecurity are common consequences.

However, my insecurities were soothed by students who told me I am like a jacaranda tree. They said a jacaranda tree has strong roots and can withstand any storm. I felt overjoyed when students said I was a “warrior teacher” and I that developed strong teachers. I was very pleased then, but when analysing it further, I asked myself what students really meant by strong and being a warrior teacher and being like a jacaranda tree. Then it dawned on me that students could see the strength in me as teacher educator but what they did not see was that a warrior gets ahead by fighting to be in control. Perhaps, I was a warrior teacher because I would fight and try to control every situation.

Students also described me as a lamplighter who shines the light of knowledge and illuminates their minds. This all seems very good if I analyse it as me giving students knowledge. I illuminated their minds, but with what? I now believe I illuminated their minds with pure accounting pedagogy content. But was I shaping and moulding them to illuminate the minds of their future learners or to be lamplighters for education? When I analysed my role modelling, I came to see that I had not been preparing my students to become lifelong learners because I did not give them opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning, to make mistakes, and learn from their own mistakes. I was not preparing them to become lifelong learners.

My Third Collage Portrait

This collage portrait was developed to represent my learning in response to my third research question on how I can develop as a more productive role model (see Figure 2.7).

This collage portrait is different from my second collage portrait because it represents my experience of transforming. The student metaphor drawing describing me as a gardener in this collage portrait portrays not a rigid, powerful Ferrari, but a relaxed and content gardener. Even the colours the students used to draw their metaphors are in subdued colours—unlike the bright and vivid red, yellow, and green used in the second collage portrait. The metaphor drawing on the top left hand corner shows me holding the hands of my students because students noticed that I was involving them more actively in choices concerning their learning. My transforming self was taking this learning journey together with them (see Chapters Seven and Eight).

To complement this metaphor drawing of me as a gardener, is the metaphor drawing of me as a baker. Students said that I was now asking their perspectives and opinions. For example, the activity where they had to choose the most suitable assessment technique (Chapter Eight). I now role model behaviours where I discuss student learning with them, then we choose the most suitable strategies and try to put those into action in the classroom—just as a baker chooses the right ingredients to bake a cake.

In this collage portrait, I also included the metaphor drawing of the tightrope walker that I drew to represent a critical moment I experienced (Chapter Nine). I included this metaphor drawing as a reminder to myself that, although I was transforming my role modelling, I must not take students for granted. This also demonstrates that although I may be transforming, I must not expect my students to transform at the same pace as I am. I will have to be aware of their capabilities and diversity in learning styles. I included two photographs of the mock Zulu wedding and sketch that students did in their show. This is to remind me how much students enjoyed me incorporating the arts into my teaching. It also indicates how my role modelling is transforming because I am allowing the students the freedom to learn in a way that they enjoy. I am no longer imposing my rigid style onto them.

The pieces of text on the collage portrait are my reflections on the conversations with my critical friends and the institutions' lecturer evaluation questionnaires. Critical friends who sat in on some of my lectures (for example, the debate in Chapter Eight), stated that they could see a visible difference in my teaching style because I did not dominate the debate at all. Students reported in their lecturer evaluations that I am no longer rigid in my teaching approaches. I am using stimulating ways of teaching and they said, most importantly, there will not be an examination for accounting pedagogy.

Finally, the student metaphor drawing I enjoyed the most is the one of the butterfly. It represents my transformation from caterpillar to a beautiful colourful butterfly. I now have wings and my mind is open just as Colin's mind opened, as indicated in the poem at the beginning of this chapter.

10.4 It's the Magic⁸⁸: My Living Educational Theory

The words, "It's the magic," are said by Colin when the gardener, Ben Weatherstaff, notices how muscular, tall, and healthy Colin looks. Colin attributes his transformation to the magic in the secret garden. Just as Colin is growing healthy and hearty, so too, I was developing my living educational theory, which stemmed from my self-study of my role modelling. According to Whitehead (2008, p. 104), a living educational theory is the reasons given by persons for the impact they have on their "own learning" and the learning of others in the social context in which they exist. I role modelled new ideas and more innovative teaching strategies towards becoming a more productive role model for my students as I enacted "purposeful pedagogies" (Samaras, 2011, p. 136) from a social constructivist perspective. I equated the gradual development of my living educational theory to the magical powers that were working in the secret garden. The restorative powers of nature, tinged with a slight bit of magic, were transforming the children—Mary, Colin, and Dickon. Likewise, my realisations that my educational values had to be present in my teaching activities, was transforming me towards becoming a social constructivist student-centred teacher educator.

During my self-study research process, my reading and learning about theoretical underpinnings of social constructivism (Chapter One), guided me to start to become aware of my students' learning and of what inspired them to learn. This knowledge heightened my awareness of seeing learning through the eyes of my students as I started to develop as a more responsive teacher educator with renewed possibilities for my students' learning. Relating my educational experiences to the principles of social constructivism provided me with a basis for looking at my pedagogic practice with a fresh view. Through my self-study, I gradually evolved and will continue to evolve as a teacher educator as I get to know my students' needs and interests. My self-study research process has enabled me to construct a more purposeful sense of how I want to teach and become a more productive role model for my students.

Through my self-study research, I came to understand that my role modelling included the messages I was sending to students during my teaching activities as well as the behaviours I was enacting. I

⁸⁸ "It's the Magic," said Colin. You see the scientific experiment has worked" (Burnett, 1969, p. 221).

came to see that I might not have been aware of these activities and behaviours but my students were very well aware of them and were enacting similar activities and behaviours in their teaching. For example, in Chapter Eight, I narrated how when my second- and third-year students taught the first-year students, the first-year students stated that the second- and third-year students did not involve them actively in the lesson—they rushed through the lesson and wanted to finish as much content as possible and did not ask many questions.

Furthermore, I learned that I could inspire and motivate students by role modelling an incorporation of the arts into my lessons. For instance, long after they have graduated and forgotten all about the academic lessons I taught them, I hope what they will remember is the lesson converting accounting content into a rap (Chapter Seven) or when they acted out an accounting transaction (Chapter Seven). Similarly, I hope that students will think back and laugh at the times when they were asked to draw a metaphor or paint a picture of themselves as teachers in the classroom instead of writing about it (Chapter Seven). I found that students become excited about a lesson when their teachers show excitement and love for the subject because the positive energy that the teacher radiates permeates beyond the classroom walls to reach the hearts and souls of students. Profoundly, I hope that role modelling innovative and creative pedagogies will leave a lasting impression on my students. Whilst incorporating the arts into teaching strategies might be commonplace for some teacher educators, it was indeed a delightful and inspiring learning curve for me.

I now see that, prior to my embarking on this study, I role modelled behaviours where I idolised knowledge and wanted to force this knowledge onto my students. Through this study, I came to understand this strategy was counterproductive to their learning. Whenever I gave students an exercise where they had to apply this forced knowledge, they were defeated even before they began the activity. For example, when I gave them the two journal articles to read, they made no attempt to even try to read them (Chapter Eight). Through my self-study, I found a new term to describe what I wanted my students to do and that is *experience the knowledge* so that they internalise the knowledge and give it their own meanings and interpretations. I observed this when I involved students in the oral storytelling activity to broaden their learning on partnerships (see Chapter Eight). Dewey (1934, p. 120) wrote, “there is a temptation to assume that presenting subject matter in its perfected form provides the royal road to learning.” Similarly, I had believed that it was necessary for me to provide perfected knowledge to my students. My self-study research has motivated me to try to provide opportunities for students to engage in self-exploration and knowledge discovery rather than only giving them notes. I now aim to role model strategies that give students the freedom to learn, to make their own mistakes, and learn from these mistakes.

To try to narrow the gap I saw between my educational values and my educational practice, I adopted a social constructivist approach in my teaching, using “purposeful pedagogies” (Samaras, 2011, p. 136). Samaras (2011) explained that possible pedagogies that you may want to enact in your practice arise from what she called “noticing” (p. 137). I can now see how when I noticed that my conventional teaching strategies were no longer effective in class, I tried to change and think about more effective pedagogies to get students to be actively involved in their learning. For example, I got students involved in debates (as described in Chapters Seven and Eight). Instead of trying to be the expert knowledge provider in the classroom, I aimed to involve students in setting their own learning goals and allowing them opportunities to learn in ways that they were comfortable with and, more importantly, in ways that they enjoyed (Chapter Seven). I tried to provide a learning environment where students were offered meaningful choices on their learning and I strove to provide them with support that discouraged dependence on me and enhanced their self-monitoring of their own learning. I wanted my students to be enthusiastic learners, surprised by what they could achieve, and to have the self-confidence to challenge their own thinking and learning (Chapters Seven and Eight).

I began asking more questions and giving students more chances to answer the questions, as well as asking the kinds of questions that allowed students to use critical thinking by exploring various possibilities when answering. For example, in Chapter Eight, I worked with students and got them to critically analyse their roles as future teachers of accounting. I asked them to evaluate themselves against certain criteria to judge whether they met the requirements of effective future accounting teachers. They also had to identify their shortcomings, which they themselves had to recognise.

I became aware that I should stop making all the decisions but should rather encourage students to play a part in deciding how they wanted to learn. I began to be more inclusive in my class by catering for different abilities and different learning styles, and by not expecting everyone to learn at the same pace. I got into the habit of asking students for feedback after every lesson to ascertain if they enjoyed the lesson or experienced problems and what might help them understand better the next time. I then planned my teaching strategies based on that feedback. For example, in Chapter Seven I told students they could use any example of performing or visual arts to demonstrate their understanding of teaching resources and teaching media. Students surprised me when they put on a fully fledged show and planned their own songs, a rap item, a mock traditional Zulu wedding, a traditional Indian dance, a sketch, and a quiz show (as shown in Chapter Seven). It was something out of the ordinary and not only did students learn, but they enjoyed the learning. In discussion with students after the show, they informed me that during the show, I had become a different person. I gave them the freedom to learn but it seemed as if I somehow became free. They viewed me in a

more positive light after the show. I agreed with students because I felt I had been liberated. I truly felt I was freed and this gave me the inspiration to venture forth into enacting “purposeful pedagogies” (Samaras, 2011, p. 136). In addition, (see Chapters Seven and Eight) I involved students in debates. These teaching strategies were also examples of “purposeful pedagogies” (Samaras, 2011, p. 136) because I “noticed” (p. 137) that I should be taking into account all learning styles of students. Furthermore, in Chapters Seven and Eight, I demonstrated how I got students involved in reflection on every purposeful pedagogy I enacted in the classroom.

I no longer just stood in front of the class (as shown in the photograph, Figure 7.1) and spoke to students. Instead, I tried to encourage more communication between students where they could get together and sit in a group and share ideas. One example was the metaphor activity (Chapter Seven) when students had to decide in groups on a metaphor that best described me. Another example was the online discussion board activity that I got students involved in (Chapter Nine). I tried not to plan every part of every lesson but, instead, I would go to class and pose a question about a section and then let the lesson progress in order to encourage independent learning as I did in Chapter Eight with the oral storytelling activity. For this activity, I did not tell students that we were focusing on the topic of partnerships but I let them find a link between their stories and the accounting section.

I shifted my focus from teaching for examinations to creating assessment tasks that allowed students to apply the knowledge to other situations and disciplines. In this way, I was placing more emphasis and value on process and students’ development rather than focusing purely on academic progress and marks. I hoped to thereby develop my students into lifelong learners who were not obsessed with marks. To illustrate, I explained to students (in Chapter Seven) that there was not going to be an examination for accounting pedagogy in future but that I would be assessing their performance in alternate ways.

My self-study research process has taught me that only through my interactions with others in my professional and social milieu, can I learn and grow. I had to confront my fear that others would think less of me if asked for help. During my research process, I consulted with fellow staff members and found that they did not think less of me. Instead, they provided encouragement and support. For example, I consulted with Mr. AK and Dr. C (Chapter Seven). I also came to see the value of critical friends during my research process and their sincere support, advice, and belief in me changed my negative attitude about seeking help from others. During the entire course of my self-study research process, I consulted with my two critical friends, Mr. C and Dr. J, as well as my critical friends in the Transformative Educational Studies Project group. In Chapter Nine, I demonstrated how I also engaged with conference

attendees as critical friends at a national university teaching and learning conference where I presented a paper on a critical moment that occurred during the online discussion board activity.

I have come to the conclusion that I must not see creativity as something possessed by certain people who paint, draw, sing, or play a musical instrument. On commencing my arts-based self-study research process, I sometimes complained bitterly and expressed regret at selecting this approach because I was intimidated by the feeling that I could not draw or paint. My childhood feelings of negative self-worth came back to haunt me and I had no faith in myself. Now, at the end of my arts-based self-study doctoral journey, I realise my research process energised and refocused me and my resultant evolving values have enabled me to value the arts in education.

Through the process of going back into my personal history, I was able to confront the demons that haunted my life and caused me to role model in certain ways. I now feel more free and less encumbered by questions about unexplained events from my past that might have gone unanswered had it not been for this self-study research. The personal history self-study process, whilst at times emotionally and psychologically draining, has given me insight on how I can move my role modelling from a highly-strung impatient individual, always wanting to be the best, to a calmer, more relaxed, and more fulfilled person who can experience peace and contentment.

10.5 The Magic Works Best When You Work Yourself⁸⁹: My Methodological Learning

In *The Secret Garden*, Colin is discerning enough to realise that things do not happen only with magic. This resonates with Samaras, (2011) who questioned whether self-study researchers can just casually claim they have used a self-study research approach, or whether they can demonstrate it, prove it. Similarly, I knew that magic was not going to help me achieve my research goal of developing as a more productive role model for my students. I anticipated that adopting an arts-based self-study methodological approach was going to help me achieve some of my aims. Hence, in this section I narrate my methodological learning.

By choosing to adopt a self-study of educational practice methodological approach, I was afforded the opportunity to experiment with exciting new ways of researching. Following the advice of Samaras (2011), I developed my own research questions that were “situated within [my] own practice” (p. 114). Through posing my first research question, I wanted to know what could have influenced my role modelling as a teacher educator of accounting pedagogy. My second research question was developed from enquiries about my teaching activities in my classroom over a period

⁸⁹ “The Magic works best when you work yourself. I am going to write a book about Magic” (Burnett, 1969, p. 221).

of time. I wanted to explore what I was role modelling for my students as a teacher educator of accounting pedagogy. My third research question explored ways that I could develop as a more productive role model for my students in accounting pedagogy.

When generating data to answer these research questions, I discovered that the self-study process did not take place in a straight line. On the contrary, my research process required me to move back and forth from the present to the past, back to the present and, finally, to the future. This took place because I was exploring what I was role modelling in my practice in the present and also moving back to my past to explore my lived experiences that might provide answers on what influenced my role modelling. Then, I came back to the present, documented my teaching activities, and moved to the future to explain how I could act as a more productive role model. I saw my self-study research process as a pendulum, going back and forth, and this kept me energised and invigorated.

Adding to this, my self-study research process allowed me to examine my pedagogic practice while simultaneously examining myself. I came to understand how I was studying myself in relation to my practice. My self-study research methodology led me to understand that these two phenomena were inextricably interwoven. Despite learning from my reading that studying myself in relation to my practice was fundamental to the self-study research genre (Pinnegar et al., 2010), at times, this presented me with a problem because I was both the researcher and the researched. I became confused about whether I was the researched or I was researching. To begin with, I presented my data in the third person and my work read as if I was a journalist for a newspaper reporting an incident. I was scared to use the word, *I*. Firstly, this was because my previous studies had discouraged the use of the first-person and secondly, having taught accounting for many years, I wanted to present my data in columns like a financial statement. It took much patience on the part of my supervisor to get me to immerse myself in my self-study research process. Something that helped was when she gave me a wonderful bit of advice. She told me to write as if I was writing a fictional story and not my doctoral thesis. So I wrote my story with my old friend *The Secret Garden* to help me along the way and it began to emerge in a creative and original manner.

In writing my own creative nonfiction story, I sometimes had to “stand in my own vulnerability for it to become a strength” (Schulte, 2009, p. 1). My critically self-reflective research process made me question and examine my own assumptions, values, and beliefs. For example, my critical friends, Mr. C and Dr. J, commented that I over teach (Chapter Seven). Also, when my students drew the Ferrari metaphor to describe me, they stated that my pace of teaching was very fast and sometimes students got left behind or did not understand (Chapter Seven). In receiving these critical comments,

I felt exposed. It felt like I had shed my clothing because I had put myself out there, bare-bodied and scared. But I eventually came to terms with my nakedness. As I stand at the culmination of my self-study research process, I am semi dressed because with self-study there is no actual end. My research process has taught me that I will be constantly transforming my role modelling and growing. Self-study research will allow me to explore my own transformation, and the impact that my transformed role modelling has on my students, as an ongoing process.

Pinnegar et al. (2010) informed me that understanding the context of the study was critical to making sense of the data generated. My educational practice was situated in a school of education at a university of technology. At a university of technology, the main focus of lecturing is not on theoretical understandings but, rather, on practical implementations of theory because of the vocational ethos. Hence, in my teaching context there were large classes with many faculty members teaching a large variety of subjects. This impacted positively on the data I generated because I could hold scholarly conversations and engage in dialogue and debate about educational issues with a multiple and diverse faculty. The programme on which I teach is an annual programme, which gave me the advantage of documenting my teaching activities over a continuous period of time.

Because this was my first experience with self-study research, I learned from LaBoskey (2004) that self-study researchers can enhance academic credibility in their research by dialoguing with scholarly literature. I found self-study literature easily understandable because most of the self-study research books and articles I read were not complex nor contained academic jargon. However, my difficulty was the process of interweaving the scholarly literature (Samaras, 2011) that I consulted into my creative nonfiction writing. In my previous studies, I had created a separate literature review chapter, and this interwoven style of writing was very new for me. The initial drafts of my writing read very poorly because it seemed as if I had just stuck in excerpts from scholarly literature here and there. Nevertheless, after I had consulted a number of self-study books and articles, I found that the writers had engaged and interacted with the literature before including it in their work so that, instead of their writing appearing disjointed, it read like a story—smooth and flowing. Once again, my supervisor guided me by telling me I must visualise each scholar standing in front of me, having a dialogue with me. She advised me to download a photograph of the scholars and keep them in front of me. This was brilliant because I would literally engage in a conversation with scholars about their writing, and my literature review became more of an intellectual conversation. I found I could internalise what a scholar was saying, and relate his or her writing to my own in a way that blended with my work.

I was excited to find out that self-study research methodologies were characterised by deliberate searching for the opinions and perspectives of significant others (Samaras, 2011). These significant others became my critical friends because they supported and encouraged me whilst at the same time providing me with creative inspiring avenues of viewing my work. My choice of research methodology created a space where I could engage with and interact with my critical friends in a safe supportive environment. A doctoral journey can be a lonely one but my critical friends filled my journey with warmth and encouragement. They helped me to not become too self-absorbed by taking me out of my comfort zone and asking provocative questions. I was able to take a step away from my study and see it from an outsider's perspective (Loughran & Northfield, 1998). My critical friends challenged my work in progress and, in this way my, work was nourished and strengthened with the academic prowess of critical friends from diverse disciplinary backgrounds.

Although my self-study was about studying myself in my practice (Samaras & Freese, 2006), I realised that it was important to make my work public. By allowing others to view my work, I was able to gain a variety of ideas on how to make real changes to myself and my practice and, thereby, enhance my personal and professional growth and development. This was very helpful because others could see things in my study that I was not able to see because I was too close to it. I presented my work in progress at three conferences (Hiralaal, 2014, 2015, & 2016). By presenting my work in progress at these conferences, I was paying heed to the question posed by Samaras (2011, p. 259): "Was there any evidence that the researcher had gone beyond their immediate circle and questioned their work with folks of different or divergent perspectives and experience?" As Russell (2009) suggested, by making my work public I came to see how I could make changes—together with others and via them.

For example, I developed my first collage portrait and shared it for critique at an international self-study conference (Hiralaal, 2014). Whilst encouraging and supporting me, the conference attendees also asked me provocative questions and made valuable suggestions and recommendations about the collage portrait. Engaging in dialogue about the collage portrait with others helped me to view my learning, as represented on the collage portrait, from varying angles. Through such experiences, I came to see that liaising with others is a necessary condition for "strengthening" my self-study research (Berry & Russell, 2014, p. 195).

In making my self-study research public, I also helped the wider university education community because others could share in the knowledge I had generated and, thereby, build on their knowledge and enhance their own learning (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998). For instance, my presenting of a paper

at a conference helped other attendees think about visual arts-based research practices and gender issues when I was asked why I drew a man to illustrate my experience even though I am a woman. The ensuing discussion was engaging and captivating as conference attendees gave their viewpoints (Chapter Nine).

My research methodology helped me to transform and be creative in my pedagogic practice because, prior to doing my self-study, I was rigid in the way I taught, I wanted everything to be perfect, straight, and given to me in the correct order. I have found that in doing the self-study, I have changed, and even my students have noticed. They say I am more relaxed and not so rigid in the way I approach teaching (see Chapters Seven and Eight).

My most exciting and interesting learning from using an arts-based methodological approach was using children's fiction in the form of the novel, *The Secret Garden*, as a creative nonfiction device for constructing my thesis. Zipes (2012) explained that children's fiction in the form of fairy tales commences with conflict because everybody begins their life with conflict. He proposed that, somehow, we do not fit into this world and therefore we have to reinvent ourselves to be able to fit in. Thus, Zipes (2012) contended that fairy tales are informed by the human desire to transform and thereby fit in this world. He maintained that fairy tales are tied to lived experiences. I found this resonated with me as I fashioned my lived experiences in relation to the fictional life experiences of the central character, Mary Lennox, in *The Secret Garden*. This creative nonfiction device was very helpful because, as stated previously, I found it difficult to come to terms with being the researcher as well as the researched. Using the storyline in the novel helped me to not become too self-absorbed, especially when writing my personal history narrative. Whilst writing my personal history narrative, there were many emotional, traumatic, and tragic experiences I had to relive. Using the characters in the novel helped me to take a step out of those emotionally laden episodes and look at the incidents from other perspectives. Whenever I felt I was becoming too involved an experience, I would tell myself that I was relating Mary Lennox's experiences and not my own.

The Secret Garden was my saviour as a young child. It was the place where I escaped when I was hurting. It was my safe place where I could be who I wanted to be—the heroine or the villain. A secret garden was the obvious place for me to feel safe enough to reinvent myself and change. During my self-study research process, at times when I felt vulnerable, for example, during the critical moment I experienced with the online discussion board activity (Chapter Nine), I escaped to my safe secret garden. The high walls protected me as a child and still protect me as an adult because the magical enchantment of the garden surrounds me and is my safety net. Therefore, I found it easier to write about my pedagogical experiences when relating them to the novel.

When I was confronted with a “living contradiction” (Whitehead, 1989, p. 41) in my pedagogical practice, I was initially shocked because I had envisaged that I was the perfect accounting teacher educator. This resonated very appropriately with the contrariness that Mary felt at the beginning of the novel (Chapter One). Just as Mary and Colin were changing because of their engagement in the secret garden, I was also going through my transformation as I confronted the “living contradiction” (Whitehead, 1989, p. 41) and began to enact more “purposeful pedagogies” (Samaras, 2011, p. 136) in my classroom (see Chapters Seven and Eight). While Mary was busy bringing the plants to life, skipping and running in the open fresh air, eating healthily, and enjoying her time in the secret garden, and while Colin was exercising and learning to walk on his own and Dickon was planting new flowers and shrubs in the secret garden, I was getting my students involved in activities from a social constructivist perspective. I found it exciting and interesting to parallel my pedagogical transformation with the fictional transformation of the characters in the novel.

Samaras and Freese (2006, p. 73) described an arts-based self-study approach as one that “promotes and provokes self-reflection, critical analysis and dialogue about improving one’s teaching through the arts.” Similarly, when I adopted an arts-based self-study approach, I was able to represent and review my work in exciting nontraditional ways, for example, through metaphor drawings, collage, and photographs. I learned that, as Galman (2009) noted, arts-based self-study research “is about using the power, economy, and reflective or transformative potential of the arts to conduct and deepen inquiry” (p. 130). To illustrate, when I gave my students an activity of drawing a metaphor that described them as future teachers and me as their teacher educator in the classroom, students reported to me after the activity that it was a welcome break from the usual accounting pedagogy lesson (see Chapter Seven). The aim of this activity was for students to begin to develop their own teaching philosophies, and drawing a metaphor helped them to make abstract thoughts about their values, beliefs, and educational ideas more concrete. Students also reported that the metaphor drawing acted like a shield for them because they could be honest about me and my teaching activities without any fear of repercussions. Furthermore, they stated that by working in a group, they felt safe because it was not the opinion of one student but a collective viewpoint.

Another example is that after I drew a metaphor of a tightrope walker to represent a critical moment that occurred during my teaching, I found that I could write about the incident in explicit detail. Students had confronted me about giving them an online discussion board activity that spanned five weeks and when I told them the activity was to be done after normal lecture time and was not going to be graded, students became angry. At that moment, I was unsettled. I experienced fear and anxiety because I did not know what direction the confrontation was going to take. I likened myself to a

tightrope walker high in the sky where anything could happen. Thus, I drew a metaphor of a tightrope walker to depict this nodal moment (Chapter Nine). Before I drew the metaphor, I had written about the incident as a narrative. But it lacked the impact that the drawing had. Through working with the drawing, my anxiety and fearfulness materialised and became tangible and real. This allowed me to then deepen my reflection and learning as well as to share it with others.

Drawing on the arts enabled me to develop unconventional and innovative ways of teaching, learning, and researching and my choice of an arts-based self-study research approach inspired me to do this. As Samaras (2011) explained, artistic representations of my learning, for example, in the form of collage portraits, gave me a different structure to reveal something that more conventional research reporting might not have.

Prior to creating a collage, I found that when I represented my learning solely in written form, it seemed to be lifeless words on paper. However, when I developed the collage, my learning seemed to come alive. Creating the collage portraits assisted me in giving meaning to my personal and professional learning in very tangible ways (Butler-Kisber, 2008). The manner in which I juxtaposed my metaphor drawings with written text ignited my thinking about my personal history role modelling in diverse ways. Implicit and abstract meanings emerged from the way I positioned the text and the images (Mullen as cited in Butler-Kisber, 2008). I did not complete the collage portraits all at once but practised setting the images and textual evidence on ordinary chart paper and my understandings intensified with each new setting. My experience was similar to Burns (2003, p. 9) who reported that “images enable meaning to travel in ways that words cannot.”

Constructing found poems to commence each chapter became a vital part of adopting an arts-based self-study research approach. Creating found poetry was an exciting adventure because I have a great passion for languages and initially qualified as an English teacher. However, I did not get much chance to teach English because I was asked to teach commerce subjects at the school where I was first employed (see Chapter Six). So this was an opportunity to put my literary interests into practice. I took great delight in constructing the poems and relating the poems to my lived experiences. For me, it was like putting pieces of a puzzle together as I searched the text of *The Secret Garden* to find apt words and phrases that could be developed into poems.

I learned quite far into my study that, as a self-study researcher, I could have taken snapshots of events, experiences, significant moments, and memorable episodes, analysed them, and reflected on the analysis to explore how they may have impacted on my development. I only realised this when I was ready to develop my first collage portrait. I had boxes and files of data along with four

notebooks that served as my reflective diaries (see Chapter Two). I had an overwhelming amount of data because I spent a lot of valuable time and energy trying to document every aspect of my educational practice. I spent hours transcribing entire audio taped conversations and dialogues and then reflecting on them. The enormity of what I had to do was sometimes overwhelming and demotivating. By the end of my data generating process, I had learnt that for future self-study research, it could be more advisable to take bite-sized portions out of my pedagogical practice and focus deeply on those. In this way, I could gain a more in-depth, instead of broad, understanding of my role modelling.

If I had to conduct this self-study research again, instead of trying to get a complete overview of self-study research and reading every piece of methodological literature I could get my hands on, I would first write my personal history narrative and pedagogical narratives as if I were writing a novel. Then, perhaps, my writing would be more free flowing. Once I had written a draft narrative, then I would consult and interweave the relevant literature, and revise my narrative. I spent a lot of energy and time reading books and journals before I began writing my narrative. This confused me sometimes instead of assisting me. I would jump from idea to idea and change my mind about my research every time I read a new thesis or a journal article. I wanted to do what everybody else was doing rather than what I was supposed to do, which was writing my own narrative.

The advice I would give to those who want to embark on self-study of educational practice is to just be yourself. Do not try to conform because each person's experience is unique and if you try, as I did, to emulate what other people were doing, you might end up like I did at first—feeling frustrated and despondent. I do not mean that you do not have to consult relevant literature, but I would advise that you begin by writing your own narrative based on your experiences. Be true to yourself by not being afraid of putting yourself out there for all to see. I have learned that it is normal to feel vulnerable. As Samaras et al. (2014) advised, self-study places you in a position where you come face to face with your shortcomings and, hence, you become more aware of living contradictions. As Samaras et al. (2014) added, self-study is not a safe cocoon but is fraught with “messiness, uncertainty and complexity (p. 368). Personally, I feel that this is what gave my self-study research its appeal. If you feel as I initially felt, the perfect teacher educator, then you are not allowing yourself to grow, develop, and learn. I have learned that self-study of educational practice is a study that requires personal and professional honesty, truthfulness, and openness. As Russell (2009) noted, “experience matters, and the learning is in the experience” (p. 84).

10.6 Having Made This Discovery, I Want to Spread the Magic⁹⁰

In *The Secret Garden*, Colin is convinced his healing can be partly attributed to the magic in the secret garden. For this reason, he claims he is going to conduct scientific experiments about magic and that he wants the world to know about the power of magic. Likewise, having completed this thesis, I wanted to share my discoveries so that other people interested in self-study research, teacher educators of accounting pedagogy, and other university educators might learn from it.

Although the blurring of the researcher and researched sometimes presented a problem for me, being able to access and communicate my innermost thoughts and emotions through creative nonfiction is what made this self-study research a powerful and unique tool for understanding the self (Chang, Hernandez, & Ngunjiri, 2010). In choosing to adopt a creative nonfiction writing style, it became easier for me to analyse the data and write about lived experiences in a more creative and engaging way (Wall, 2006). Through my interactions with my critical friends, I came to realise that this style of writing appealed to them as readers thus making this thesis more accessible to others.

In relation to enacting purposeful pedagogies, I want to elaborate on the benefits for my students of me undertaking this study with the following e-mail from a student:

Dear Mrs. Hiralaal

I also wanted to tell you that I have really enjoyed your teaching. I have learned the most from your lectures compared to my other specialisations. Thank you for your passion for teaching, I have felt the difference

From TZ

(Personal communication, Friday, 18 November 2016)

This is only one example from one student. There were many other comments from students who indicated that my transforming self and my transforming pedagogy have benefitted them tremendously. A number of students indicated that now I am enacting purposeful pedagogies underpinned by the social constructivist teaching approach, not only do they see the practical application of the theory, they are actively involved in the learning process. They now feel that they can take responsibility for their own learning. As the student in the above e-mail indicated, she felt the difference.

⁹⁰ “Having made this discovery, the Magic is everywhere, I want to spread the Magic, Magic is a great thing” (Burnett, 1969, p. 195).

Furthermore, students have told me that when they went for teaching practicum recently (July 2016 till August 2016), they enacted their learning about using arts in accounting teaching at the schools. They said reports from high school learners were positive and their mentor teachers were delighted with the new interest in accounting shown by the learners. The mentor teachers also reported that the arts-based approaches brought life back into the classrooms. Some of my students had enacted the metaphor drawing activity and got learners to draw them as teachers in the class. Their classrooms took on a totally different appearance because previously graffiti-ridden or stark walls of the classrooms were now made colourful and interesting with learners' metaphor drawings.

Moreover, students reported that the teaching strategy of oral storytelling was also very popular amongst the learners at school. Abstract and difficult concepts in accounting, such as the interpretation of financial information for the future financial success of a business enterprise, was a topic seen with dread and fear amongst Grade 12 learners. In previous years, learners were given figures, asked to calculate the ratios and then add two or three lines of comment about the ratios. Now, in the external matriculation examination, learners are given the calculated financial ratios and asked to interpret them. This interpretation presented a problem to teachers and learners. The teachers, whilst understanding themselves, the implications of these ratios had difficulty in explaining to the learners. Building on their experiences in our class, my students used oral storytelling to get learners to understand the ratios—with much success. They received commendation from not only their mentor teachers but also the principal and parents of the learners.

After conducting my research, I made a point of analysing the students' teaching practice files as I had done prior to undertaking this study. The recent comments were positive, and I summarised and include them below:

Students are engaged in the lessons and can transfer their subject content knowledge to the learners in an exciting and relevant ways through debates and role playing. For example, a student taught a Grade 10 class to rap the accounting equation.

Students do not teach with the textbook in their hands, and appear self-assured and confident in their teaching.

Students have made a very positive impression on the learners and we would love to employ them after they graduate.

Students are familiar with the CAPS document for accounting and can interpret this document very well. They even helped the teachers understand this document.

(Teaching practicum files: Third-year accounting education students, July–August 2016).

My message to teacher educators, other university educators, and novice researchers wanting to adopt an arts-based self-study approach: you do not have to be artistic, creative, or fluent in visual expressions. If you just believe in yourself and venture into the art world, you can produce a relatively simple visual representation such as a collage portrait. The final product does not have to be an artistic masterpiece. As long as the collage portrait gives meaning to your work and allows you the opportunity to reimagine your lived experiences, enabling you to view your practice in imaginative and diverse ways, you too can use an arts-based research approach. Being a novice arts-based research like me, you will feel threatened and intimidated initially—but once you develop your first collage portrait, you will realise the appearance of the final artistic product is not the important issue. What is important is the message that your artistic creation conveys.

10.7 It Can't Be Nothing, I Call It "Magic"⁹¹: Conclusion

I conclude this thesis with the words of Colin who is excited about his transformation and calls it magic. I, too, am excited about my transforming role modelling. I am on my way to becoming a more productive role model for my students in accounting pedagogy.

The impetus for undertaking this self-study research was for me to align my pedagogic practice with the educational values I wanted to enact in order to address an apparent "living contradiction" (Whitehead, 1989, p. 41) so that I could develop as a more productive role model for my students. Notwithstanding that I did come to enact "purposeful pedagogies" (Samaras, 2011, p. 136), the way forward is for me to continue to reenvision myself (Mitchell & Weber, 1999). I have come to realise, through my self-study research practice, that although I have begun a process of "reinvention" (Mitchell & Weber, 1999), this is not going to be a rushed process that can be effected within a few months. Nor is the growth going to end at some point. As my educational values evolve in response to, and in relationship with, my lived experience and significant people in my life, I will be changing and learning. I end this thesis with a free verse poem developed from a phrase that I extracted from the final chapter of *The Secret Garden* and adapted as a conclusion.

⁹¹ "What is it, what is it, it can't be nothing. I don't know its name so I call it Magic" (Burnett, 1969, p. 195).

*“So long as you shut yourself up in your mind
Thoughts only of fears and weaknesses will dwell
You will know nothing of the sunshine and spring
But when new beautiful thoughts begin to push out the old hideous
one*

*Blood will run heavily through your veins
And strength will pour heavily into you like a flood
Much surprising things will happen to you
Because it can happen to anyone”⁹²*

⁹² “So long as Colin shut himself up in his room and thought of his fears and weaknesses, he knew nothing of the sunshine and the spring. When new beautiful thoughts began to push out the old hideous ones, strength poured into him like a flood. Much more surprising things can happen to anyone” (Burnett, 1969, p. 230).

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APPENDIX ONE: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



21 August 2012

Mrs Anita Hiralaal 972159578
School of Education

Dear Mrs Hiralaal

Protocol reference number: HSS/0735/012D

Project title: A self-study of my role modelling as a teacher educator of Accounting pedagogy


EXPEDITED APPROVAL

I wish to inform you that your application has been granted Full Approval through an expedited review process.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully


.....
Professor Steven Collings (Chair)

/px

cc Supervisor Dr Kathleen Pithouse-Morgan
cc Academic leader Dr D Davids
cc School Admin. Mrs S Naicker

Professor S Collings (Chair)
Humanities & Social SC Research Ethics Committee

APPENDIX TWO: TURNITIN REPORT

Turnitin Originality Report

Turnitin Originality Report

Full thesis by Anita Hiralaal

From Chapter drafts (Phd)

Processed on 27-Nov-2017 11:00 AM

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paper text:

CHAPTER ONE: MISTRESS MARY QUITE CONTRARY¹ Refuse to believe A strange new thing can be done See—then it is done² Riquet à la Houppe³ This self-study research involved an exploration into my pedagogical practice to explore what I was role modelling for my students as a teacher educator of accounting pedagogy in a South African university of technology. I embarked on an exploration of my educational practice because students informed me they were teaching as I taught them. This comment sent me on a path of self-reflection and I became aware that there seemed to be a “living contradiction” (Whitehead, 1989, p. 41) in my pedagogical practice because it appeared that my educational values were not being played out in my teaching activities. I used the children’s novel, *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett (1969), as a creative nonfiction device in constructing this thesis. I decided to do this because of my long-standing love for this novel and because the fictional life experiences of the protagonist, Mary Lennox, resonated very aptly with my lived experiences. Creative nonfiction is a form of “creative analytical practice (CAP)” that allows a researcher to tell an evocative story that is rooted in research data and also draws on “literary conventions” (Palmer, Cresswell, & Loveday, 2015, p. 1). Or, as Cheney (2001, p. 1) put it, “creative nonfiction tells a story using facts, but uses many of the techniques of fiction for its compelling qualities and emotional vibrancy.” In the novel, *The Secret Garden*, a rich Englishman, Mr Archibald Craven who is hunchbacked, marries a beautiful lady. On the vast grounds of his home, Mrs Craven plants a luscious garden with roses and other flowers. Sadly, she falls off a branch of a tree in the garden while expecting a baby. Unfortunately, she dies but not before giving birth to a son, Colin. So devastated is he by her death, that Archibald Craven cannot bear to look at his son, Colin, because he reminds him too much of his wife. After his wife’s death, he closes the garden and throws away the key. Archibald Craven is lonely, sad, and bitter and travels widely in an attempt to overcome his grief. However, his life changes when his niece, Mary Lennox, the child of his wife’s brother, comes to live at his home after her parents die of cholera in India. Mary discovers the secret locked garden and through the magical energy in the secret garden, she brings life back to the house, the garden, her cousin Colin, and her uncle—and she is transformed from a reserved, selfish, and disliked girl into a happy and lovable young woman. Before Mary leaves India to go and live with her uncle, she spends a few days in the home of a local family. The children take an instant dislike to her because she refuses to join them in any activity or be friendly towards them. Hence, they tease her— “Mistress Mary, quite contrary.” These words are very befitting of Mary’s disposition at that point because she

feels very contrary to herself. Having lost everything in her life, she is having a surreal experience and feeling rather at odds with herself because she feels she does not belong in a strange home. Hence, I used these words, "Mistress Mary Quite Contrary," as the heading of this first chapter because I, too, was feeling quite contrary when I began my self-study research and started to become aware of a living contradiction in my teacher education practice. "This is a stance towards research that Leavy (2009) is very much in support of in her approaches to arts-based research and practice in sociology. Meanwhile Sparkes (1997) and later, Smith, McGannon and Williams (2015) applied this ideology

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APPENDIX THREE: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER TO HEAD OF DEPARTMENT FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS

17 Fairfield Avenue
Scottsville
Pietermaritzburg
3201
27 August 2013

The Head of Department
Professor P Siyakwazi
School of Education
Indumiso Campus
Durban University of Technology

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITH STAFF AND STUDENTS

Please be informed that I am studying towards a Ph D degree through the University of KwaZulu- Natal. My topic is "Self-Study of my Implicit Role Modelling as a Teacher Educator of Accounting Pedagogy". My supervisor is Dr Kathleen Pithouse-Morgan.

The purpose of my study is to explore myself in relation to my practice as an Accounting Education teacher educator. Although this is a self-study and I am the main participant, I will be generating data from the staff and students in the School of Education.

In this regard, I am seeking permission to conduct this study in the School of Education. I wish to pledge my promise that at no time at all, will the staff and students' confidentiality be compromised or jeopardized. The highest level of confidentiality will be maintained at all times and in all interactions with staff and students.

Please feel free to contact me should you require any additional information.

Your faithfully



A Hiralal

APPENDIX FOUR: REFLECTIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What were the most positive experiences in Accounting Education?

[illegible]

2. What made them so positive? List as many things as possible but be specific.

[illegible]



3. What were the most negative experiences in Accounting Education?

[illegible]

4. What made them so negative. List as many things as possible but be specific.

[illegible]

APPENDIX FIVE: ANNUAL LECTURER EVALUATION

EvaSys	LECTURER EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE	
CQPA	LECTURER EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE (LEQ)	TION
QUESTIONNAIRE 		
Mark as shown: <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		
will be processed automatically: <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		

Please use a ball-point pen or a thin felt tip. This form

Correction:

Please follow the examples shown on the left hand side to help optimize the reading results.

1. INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENTS

1.1 Please fill in the name of the lecturer being evaluated, in the space below

For each statement please indicate which SINGLE response most accurately reflects your learning experiences with this lecturer. Your response is COMPLETELY ANONYMOUS i.e. no one will be able to identify you. Do not put your name on the questionnaire.

FOR PAPER SURVEYS, PLEASE MARK YOUR RESPONSE WITH AN X.

OPTIONS ARE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT SA =STRONGLY AGREE, A =AGREE, N

=NEUTRAL, D =DISAGREE, SD = STRONGLY DISAGREE AND NA =NOT APPLICABLE

2. ORGANISATION AND PLANNING

	SA	A	N	D	SD	NA
THE LECTURER:						
2.1 Is prepared for the learning period (lecture)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2 Keeps to the time allocated for the learning period	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.3 Explains how the sections of the subject are linked together	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. TEACHING AND LEARNING

THE LECTURER:		SA	A	N	D	SD	NA
3.1	Communicates clearly						
3.2	Communicates audibly so that I can hear all that is said by the lecturer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.3	Uses several methods of teaching to help me learn	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.4	Explains the relevance of this subject to the work environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.5	Makes me want to learn more about the subject	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.6	Uses a style of questioning that encourages me to respond	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.7	Gives students the opportunity to ask questions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.8	Uses students' questions and answers to help everyone learn	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.9	Shows me how to improve the way I learn	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.10	Uses visual aids to help me learn	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. INDIVIDUAL RAPPORT AND SUPPORT

THE LECTURER:		SA	A	N	D	SD	NA
4.1	Is approachable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2	Is enthusiastic about this subject area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3	Gives me the opportunity to work as a member of a group or pair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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DRAFT

EvaSys	DUT - LECTURER EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE	
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4. INDIVIDUAL RAPPORT AND SUPPORT [Continue]

FOR PAPER SURVEYS, PLEASE MARK YOUR RESPONSE WITH AN X.
 OPTIONS ARE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT SA =STRONGLY AGREE, A =AGREE, N =NEUTRAL, D =DISAGREE, SD = STRONGLY DISAGREE AND NA =NOT APPLICABLE

THE LECTURER:		SA	A	N	D	SD	NA
4.4	Is available in consultation times outside of class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5	Tells me where to get help, for example, at student counselling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. ASSESSMENT

THE LECTURER:		SA	A	N	D	SD	NA
5.1	Provides clear guidelines for assessments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.2	Provides an assessment plan with due dates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.3	Uses several methods of assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.4	Provides feedback within 10 working days or as set out in the study guide	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.5	Provides useful feedback to help me learn	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. RESOURCES

THE LECTURER:		SA	A	N	D	SD	NA
6.1	Provides learning materials that help me to learn	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.2	Provides useful sources of information for reference	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. QUALITATIVE QUESTIONS

7.1 Outline what you liked the best about this lecturer's teaching

7.2 Outline what you would like to see improved in this lecturer's teaching

APPENDIX SIX: LESSON ASSESSMENT FORM

NAME:	DATE:
LEARNING AREA AND TOPIC:	GRADE:
PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS [10] Bearing and confidence, eye contact, attitude and enthusiasm, skill of variation in movement and gestures	
PREPARATION [10] Adequacy of lesson preparation	
PRESENTATION OF LESSON Introduction: Arousal of learner's interest, establishment of prior knowledge and clear relationship to content of lesson [10] Lesson Development: [30] Mastery of subject matter Questioning skills Skills of illustrating with examples Skills of explaining Effective use of media Appropriate and effective use of teaching methods Learner participation Conclusion of lesson [10]	
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT [30] Management of learners Management of content Clear instructions Organisation of materials	
TOTAL MARKS AWARDED	