

**IMPROVING MY PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH TO TEACHING  
SEXUALITY EDUCATION AT A TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL  
EDUCATION AND TRAINING COLLEGE**

**A TEACHER'S SELF STUDY**

**BY**

**MELISSA MOSES**

**SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DEGREE**

**OF**

**MASTER OF EDUCATION - CURRICULUM STUDIES**

**IN THE**

**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

**EDGEWOOD CAMPUS**

Date: January 2021

Supervisor: Dr Lungile Masinga

**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES**  
**DECLARATION**

I, **MELISSA MOSES**, declare that

- The research report in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated is my original research.
- This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
- This thesis does not contain other persons' writing, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other resources. Where other written sources have been quoted, then:
  - Their words have been re-written but the general information attributed to them has been referenced.
  - Where their exact words have been used, then their writing has been placed, inside quotation marks and referenced.
- This thesis does not contain text, graphics or tables copied and pasted from the internet, unless specifically acknowledged, and the source being detailed in the thesis and in the reference section.

Signed:

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of the author.

## **STATEMENT BY SUPERVISORS**

This thesis is submitted with my approval.



DR LUNGILE MASINGA

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The journey to the completion of this thesis entailed a lot of hard work, sacrifice and motivation. I wish to offer my sincere gratitude to the following people whose help and support was important in the accomplishment of my effort:

- Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ for his ever faithful love and blessings in my life. For giving me strength and good health in completing this thesis.
- My supervisor, Dr Lungile Masinga, for her patience and understanding and the guidance that she had provided me even at times when I seemed to go astray. You have equipped me with knowledge in my profession that has made me a better person (thank you mama).
- My Editor, Dr Anita Hiralaal, for all your hard work and hours spent in editing my thesis.
- My critical friend, Mr Isaac Okoli, for all your encouragement and motivation throughout this process.
- A special thank you to Mr Ramchunder Surfilall-Roy, thank you for believing in me, supporting me and standing by me throughout this journey. Your advice and invaluable input is much appreciated.
- Most importantly, my parents, Freddy Moses and Charmaine Moses for all your love, support and motivation. Thank you for continuously encouraging me and been my pillar of strength.

## ABSTRACT

This thesis is based on a self-study, which I conducted as a Life Orientation lecturer in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Sector. I undertook a journey on exploring how I could improve my sexuality education teaching practice. In order to improve my pedagogical approach in teaching sexuality education, I had to first develop three research questions that were the foundation of the study. These included: *How have my lived experiences contributed to my pedagogical choices when I teach the sexuality education component in the Life Orientation curriculum? How do students experience and respond to my teaching of the sexuality education component of the Life Orientation curriculum? What can I learn from my teaching experiences to improve my teaching practice of the Life Orientation curriculum?* To address these questions, my self-study took me through a journey of discovery into my personal history and the role of sexuality education and how it has influenced my life and my teaching practice. In doing this, I had to make use of artefact retrieval and memory drawings that took me back in time as I engaged in this retrospective process. In this study, my students were my participants and using their class activities as one of my data methods, I identified how students experienced my teaching of sexuality education. My critical friends also played an important role in this self-study as it was their input and comments that assisted me in improving my pedagogical approach in teaching sexuality education. In working on improving my pedagogical approaches in teaching sexuality education, I had to first understand my study from a socio-cultural theoretical perspective. This perspective helped me in understanding that my students come into the learning environment with different backgrounds and cultures and as their lecturer, I need to acknowledge this when planning my lessons. This work brought an understanding for me, that teaching sexuality content needs a collaborative process of engagement with students. That implies the use of teaching strategies that would provide those collective opportunities. There is valuable input that can be drawn from the students, to facilitate effective and productive learning for all. It lies in the pedagogical choices I make as a lecturer that moves the process of learning beyond my own limitations.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

LO	Life Orientation
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
NCV	National Certificate Vocational
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
HIV	Human immunodeficiency Virus
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
DoE	Department of Education
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer
HOD	Head of Department
NPDE	National Professional Diploma in Education

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES .....	x
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xi
<b>CHAPTER ONE: EXPLORING MY OWN PRACTICE OF SEXUALITY EDUCATION</b>	
Introduction.....	1
Focus purpose and rationale of the study.....	2
Background information .....	6
Research questions.....	7
Understanding my learning through a social-cultural theoretical framework .....	8
Preliminary literature review .....	10
Methodological approach.....	15
Conclusion .....	16
<b>CHAPTER TWO: THE ROAD LEADING TO CLASSROOM IMPROVEMENT ON SEXUALITY EDUCATION</b>	
Introduction.....	18
Research methodology.....	18
Research setting .....	20
Research participants .....	21
Data generation .....	23
Making meaning (data analysis and interpretation).....	29
Ethical considerations .....	29
Trustworthiness.....	30
Challenges in the study .....	31
Conclusion .....	31

### **CHAPTER THREE: THROUGH MEMORY STORIES MY LEARNINGS UNFOLDED**

Introduction.....	32
The story of my life: Being raised in a multicultural family .....	32
Good girls always stay clean.....	36
Developing into a teenager .....	39
My primary school years: The fear of starting my schooling.....	43
Secondary school years: The last cycle of my schooling .....	45
Tertiary education: The privilege of attending post school education.....	49
My learnings from my personal history .....	50
Conclusion .....	62

### **CHAPTER FOUR: IT'S TIME FOR CHANGE**

Introduction.....	63
Exploring innovative ways of improving sexuality education .....	63
Unravelling the themes .....	67
Getting familiar with the data .....	67
Generating initial codes .....	68
Searching for themes.....	69
Theme 1: Collaborative learning .....	72
Theme 2: Creating effective discussions .....	83
Conclusion .....	87

### **CHAPTER FIVE: THE SILVER LINING IN THE CLOUD OF SEXUALITY**

Introduction.....	88
Pedagogical learning 1: Using role play to teach sexuality education.....	89
Pedagogical learning 2: Using educational videos in teaching sexuality .....	95
Pedagogical learning 3: Exploring risky sexual encounters through collage making .....	97
Pedagogical learning 4:Engaging other professional partners in teaching sexuality education..	101
Conclusion.....	105

## **CHAPTER SIX: THE BEGINNING OF A REFORMED SEXUALITY PRACTITIONER**

Introduction .....	107
Review of thesis.....	107
My personal and professional learnings gained from the study.....	109
My methodological learning.....	110
Moving forward.....	111
Conclusion.....	112
REFERENCES .....	113
Appendix A - Ethical Clearance.....	119
Appendix B – Editors Certificate.....	120
Appendix C – Turnitin Report .....	121
Appendix D – Letter to the Campus Manager.....	128
Appendix E – Letter to the Manager in the office of the Principle.....	129
Appendix F – Letter to my critical friend.....	130
Appendix G – Letter to student .....	131
Appendix H – Lesson Plan 1.....	132

## LIST OF TABLES

2.1	Data generation	24
4.1	Outline of the teaching process engaged in for this study	66
4.2	Final concept map showing final themes and interesting pedagogical learnings	71

## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>FIGURE</b>	<b>CAPTION</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
3.1	A photograph of my multiracial family taken at my cousins wedding	33
3.2	The house I lived in as a child	34
3.3	A memory drawing of my brothers and I playing on a race track	38
3.4	An example of aeroplanes we made from colour paper	39
3.5	My beautiful parents	41
3.6	My school bag	43
3.7	My monitor badge at Esther Payne Smith Secondary School	47
3.8	The Debutant's ball brochure	48
3.9	Multi-coloured hairbands: a metaphorical image representing my first learning	51
3.10	A photograph of a light switch which is a metaphorical image representing my second learning	53
3.11	Collage representing: learning through games, learning through role play and learning through using art in the lesson	56
3.12	A section of the collage that representing learning through games	57
3.13	A section of the collage that representing learning through role-play	59
3.14	A section of the collage that representing learning through the use of art in the lesson	61
4.1	Data scattered across the table	68
4.2	The concept map showing my initial understanding of the coded data	70

4.3	Students doing the activity on labelling the diagram of male and female	75
4.4	Groups ideas on different occupations for males and females	77
4.5	A students reflection on playing a game during the lesson	80
4.6	The case study that students worked on	81
4.7	Students working together to complete a case study on teenage pregnancy	83
4.8	Student chart on what they want to be like or not	85
5.1	Student preparing for the role play	90
5.2	Each picture represents a scene played out by different groups of students and observed by their peers	92-93
5.3	Students written responses on what they have learnt from the role-play	93-94
5.4	Students watching the educational video on physical appearances of boys and girls	96
5.5	Students looking through magazines, newspaper and cutting and pasting pictures	99
5.6	Example of a collage done by the first group	100
5.7	A local hospital nurse engaging with the students on sexuality and teenage pregnancy	102
5.8	An example of one of the pamphlets given to students by the invited nurse	105

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **EXPLORING MY OWN PRACTICE OF SEXUALITY EDUCATION**

### **Introduction**

I am a Life Orientation (LO) lecturer in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training sector (TVET). One of the important and most controversial topics in the teaching of the LO curriculum is sexuality education. As a LO lecturer, I am responsible for ensuring that the subject content of the topic, sexuality education, is taught effectively to students. However, in my practice, I have observed that teaching the sexuality education content was becoming a chore for me, something that was not enjoyable and fun. It dawned on me that I have become someone who knows there are duties that have to be performed, and as long as my checklists were all ticked in my scheme of work, I was satisfied. Lately, as I began to question myself, I realised those ticks were meaningless in my teaching, therefore my lessons were not productive. I began to ask myself whether I was doing this just as a job or was there a need for improvement in my teaching practice of sexuality education. These thoughts moved me to undertake this journey of inquiry using a self-study methodology, to explore my own sexuality education teaching practice, with the ultimate aim of improving my practice. I wanted to teach the sexuality education content in new and exciting ways to my students than what I had been doing all along. I came to the understanding that to do this, I have to navigate my present teaching activities and my classroom practice to see how I was enacting the sexuality education curriculum with my students. Then only, could I incorporate different innovative pedagogical strategies in my teaching and improve on the way I currently act out the sexuality education curriculum. My intentions were to improve my teaching practice so that the students will benefit, which hopefully, will eventually lead to productive learning.

In this chapter, I explain the focus and purpose of my self-study research. I then provide the background information which is followed by the rationale. Next, I outline the key concepts and theoretical perspective that has guided me in this study. I go on further to describe the methodology I chose and why and how it was suitable for this study. The three research questions that is central to this study, is then explained.

### **Focus, purpose and rationale for the study**

The sexuality education component of the LO curriculum is part of the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) programme. The NCV programme is a three-year programme where students start at National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level 2 and exit at level 4. According to the DHET (2013, p. 2) the “NCV programme comprises qualifications at National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level 2-4 offered at TVET Colleges.” Similarly, in schools, grades 10, 11 and 12, are on the same NQF levels. The NCV level 4 certificate is equivalent to a Senior Certificate (matriculation certificate) that learners will achieve after successful completion of grade 12. The entry requirement for a student to be admitted to the NCV programme, is a pass at grade 9. The NCV programme comprises three fundamental subjects: English First Additional Language, Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy and Life Orientation (LO). Life Orientation is a fundamental module that all students have to do irrespective of the chosen line of study. LO is essential in the NCV qualification and is continued on all 3 levels.

The primary motivation in the prescribed LO curriculum is to develop individuals “holistically with the essential skills, knowledge and values and the necessary cognitive processes,” (DHET, 2013, p. 2). Personal Development, Learning Skills, Health and Wellbeing and Citizenship are topics that are included in the LO curriculum, of the Life Skills component. The aim of LO as mentioned in the subject guidelines is that it “pursues students in a holistic way with the personal, psychological, cognitive, physical, moral, social, and cultural skills to live meaningful and successful lives” (DHET, 2013, p. 2).

The learning outcomes for the sexuality component, as they appear in the prescribed curriculum, is for students to be able to:

*Describe human sexuality within relationships.*

*Describe the biological/physical differences between females and males.*

*Compare and describe gender roles, responsibilities and behaviour within relationships.*

*Identify situations which are likely to lead to risky sexual encounters and behaviour (range: date rape, unwanted pregnancies, STI's, including HIV).*

*Explain how to avoid these situations and make informed and responsible decisions in terms of sexuality and relationships (DHET, 2013, p. 10).*

It is precisely the nature and importance of these outcomes that got me really thinking about my practice. As I wondered about how I was teaching the sexuality education component in the TVET sector, where classes comprise of groups of students from a range of different age groups, I pondered on these age differences and asked myself whether I was enacting the curriculum effectively to meet the requirements of the programme and the needs of the students. This disparity in age coupled with the fact that some of my students were already parents and teaching about issues like unwanted pregnancy, STIs, HIV/AIDS and sexual violence became a problem for me. Owing to a constantly changing world, these issues included in the curriculum, have become paramount and need to be addressed in our classes. However, I have realised, for effective teaching and learning to happen in my classes, I needed to embark on a journey of self-discovery. As I looked more closely into my practice, I realised that I had to find more innovative ways of teaching the sexuality education curriculum so that I achieve the set goals of the prescribed curriculum while simultaneously satisfying the needs of my students.

As a lecturer, I felt that there was a need for me to grow and develop myself in how I taught the sexuality education content. I realised that sexuality education is a sensitive area and due to this, I felt I was lacking in my pedagogical choices as I approached my classroom teaching. I saw this as a crucial opportunity to look at myself and within myself and reflect on issues that could be preventing me from enhancing my sexuality education lessons. I was also concerned, because according to (DHET, 2013), LO is a subject that should be taught in a way that contributes to students' total wellbeing. My worry was that if I was falling short in my teaching of sexuality education, then how were my students going to develop into good citizens. Therefore, I decided to embark on this self-study of practice journey.

As far back as the 60s, Malfetti (1968), indicated that sex education in the schools, will increase and that it will form an integral part of the curriculum from pre-school to college education. Being a lecturer in one of these sectors, I was tasked to implement the designed curriculum at a macro level of teaching. However, I wondered whether the pedagogical choices that I made when teaching, resulted in effective teaching and learning. Hence, the purpose of this research study was to see, firstly, how I was teaching sexuality education and

then work on improving how I was teaching, as I re-imagined my pedagogical approaches. I found that self-study of practice, was most apt in exploring my practice as Pithouse, Mitchell and Pillay (2014, p. 1) explained, “through self-study of educational practice, we identify issues that we are concerned, curious, and passionate about, in relation to our own pedagogies and we research those issues in our own context.” They further state that, “We have confidence that there is always room for change, no matter how small, there is always something we can see or do differently,” (Pithouse et al., 2014, p. 1). Consequently, I wanted to do things differently since I was aware of my limitations based on my understanding that teaching sexuality education, was for me, an uncomfortable teaching space. Therefore, I believe that I may have limited myself in terms of my pedagogical choices as I opted for what was easy and comfortable for me. Allen (2009) echoed my sentiments, when he explained that sexuality education is a deep topic, and teachers must be comfortable with the topic, to be able to teach it effectively.

Hence, this self- study allowed me the opportunity to look deeply into my teaching of the sexuality education component as I searched for innovative ways that will yield positive outcomes in my classroom. At the same time, I reflected on my practice as I explored what could have influenced my pedagogical choices and how I can overcome some of the barriers that this influence could have created. In addition, in South Africa, with the rapidly increasing rate of HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy, sexual violence, human trafficking and child pornography, it has become essential that we, as lecturers, educate our students on topics that are affecting our country. According to Zisser and Francis (2006), learners are more comfortable speaking about sexuality education issues with their teachers rather than their parents. In a similar vein, it can be true that students are more comfortable talking about sexuality education issues with their lecturers on campus rather than their parents at home. Hence, it is up to lecturers, like myself to heed this call. As a fellow lecturer, I believe that I have a responsibility of preparing the youth for sexually responsible behaviour in the TVET sector, especially because the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (2009, as cited in Beyers, 2012) has revealed that a quota of youth receive inadequate information to prepare them for responsible adulthood which leaves them vulnerable to unplanned pregnancies and STD’s including HIV/AIDS.

It is with prodigious despair that I have witnessed some of my students falling pregnant during my years of teaching whilst others are already parents before entering the TVET sector. Some of them have even contacted HIV and disclosed their status to me in private. At night, when I lay in bed and reflect on my day-to-day teaching practice and episodes, my heart cries out for my students and I wished that all these issues could disappear overnight. When I awake the next morning, it is a bright new day, but, alas, nothing has changed. The lives of my students still appear to be dull and gloomy. I feel the same way as Masinga (2013), when she relates the harsh reality she faced each day, when she had no words to make things better for her learners. I then asked myself what I could change to make things different. I believe the answer to that is I can only inform, encourage, motivate and most of all educate my students to become responsible sexual beings. This I can achieve through engaging in the process of self-discovery through a self-study methodology and improve my sexuality education teaching practice.

Having similar thoughts is Appalsamy (2015), who believes that, if teachers teach sexuality education properly, then the rate of HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy, sexual violence and human trafficking will be at its lowest. From this statement, I understand that this belief can also relate to and is relevant to the TVET sector. My concomitant belief is that if lecturers are well equipped to facilitate the teaching of sexuality education, then a decrease in such issues will be evident. Contrarily, Beyers (2011) argues that whilst teachers may possess the necessary knowledge on sexuality education and are comfortable in teaching the content, their knowledge derives from their own conceptualisations of sexuality education. In addition, I also learnt from Beyers (2011) that lecturers sometimes shy away from sexuality education topics due to their embedded cultural beliefs.

With that being said, I believe that this study will be significant to lecturers desiring to pursue their professional development in the field of education, moreover, sexuality education. This study may also have an influence on the pedagogical choices that lecturers make during curriculum delivery of sexuality education.

### **Background information**

I am a LO lecturer who has been employed in the TVET sector for 13 years. The TVET sector is a higher education sector that caters for students who wish to pursue a vocational career path. A vocational career path focuses more on practical work, rather than traditional academic exams. The vocational part of the name refers to the fact that this course prepares you for a vocation or a job and equips you with the skillset required in different types of jobs. Previously, the TVET sector did not have a curriculum that incorporated LO with a learning area addressing sexuality education. This came into being when the NCV programme was introduced in the TVET college curriculum in 2007, and LO was regarded as one of the fundamental subjects.

The central purpose for incorporating this programme into the TVET college curriculum was to address the skills shortage in the country identified by the new democratic government of South Africa in 1994. According to the Department of Education (2011), LO is the study of the self in relation to others and to society. Issues such as social engagement, career choices and a healthy and productive life, are addressed through LO. Van Deventer (2008, p. 132) mentions that “to face life’s challenges, LO needs to equip learners with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to meet these challenges in an informed, confident and responsible way.” When I was employed in 2007 at the TVET college, I found that it was an Engineering Campus and LO was a new subject included in the programme. I did not undergo any formal training at that time. All I received was the learning material and the subject and assessment guidelines for LO. This was something new to me, and I had to study the guidelines to ensure that I understood what was required of me in the subject. In 2009, training was provided for all LO lecturers. This training focused mostly on the assessments in the subject rather than teaching and learning strategies.

This inadequate training provided on teaching strategies for LO, has prompted me on embarking on this journey to explore innovative pedagogies that are suitable and relevant in the teaching of sexuality education in order to improve my practice.

## **Research questions**

The three research questions that have guided my study are

### **QUESTION 1**

*How have my lived experiences contributed to my pedagogical choices when I teach the sexuality education component in the Life Orientation curriculum*

I responded to this question in chapter three of this dissertation. I recalled special episodes in my life on how sexuality education issues were taught to me at home, how these issues were discussed during my teenage years at primary school and in secondary school. As I recalled these moments, I paid special attention to how my teachers addressed the sexuality education topics during lessons. Thus, looking at my past experiences, I have gained an understanding of the pedagogical choices that should be implemented in lessons, when sexuality education is taught. I employed the use of collage making, memory drawing and artefact retrieval to facilitate the response to this question. This process of recalling past experiences has helped me in identifying pedagogies that are suitable and appropriate to be used during lessons.

### **QUESTION 2**

*How do students experience and respond to my teaching of the sexuality education component of the Life Orientation curriculum?*

This question is addressed in chapter four and five of this study. In responding to this question, I used structured lesson plans that incorporated a wide variety of pedagogies for my lessons. In my lessons, I made use of collages, charts, discussions, role-plays, games, you-tube videos etc. Each activity was linked to a learning outcome in relation to sexuality education. I closely observed classroom discussions in order to get a sense of how students experienced the lessons and content that was being taught. I also paid careful attention to the verbal comments, body language and gestures used during the lessons such as student's facial expressions. Importantly, students' written reflections gave me an understanding of how they experienced and responded to my teaching of the sexuality education content. I further engaged in reflective journal writing. Reflections on these lessons and the process of learning was recorded in this reflective journal.

### **QUESTION 3**

*What can I learn from my teaching experiences to improve my teaching practice of the Life Orientation curriculum?*

With the aim of improving my pedagogical choices, I learnt new methods for my teaching of sexuality education. To address this question, it was important that I keep a reflective journal of my teaching that aided me in discovering new strategies for my teaching activities. This question was addressed in my chapter three where I gave an account of my learnings from my personal history depicted through a collage and the use of metaphors. Whereas in chapter six I then addressed how these learnings will be used in future improvement in teaching of sexuality education.

#### **Understanding my learning through a socio-cultural theoretical framework**

In understanding my teaching and learning, I framed my teaching within a socio-cultural theoretical perspective. I felt that the socio-cultural theoretical perspective aligned with my study because the socio-cultural theoretical perspective is concerned with learning as a social process and within a particular cultural context (Woolfolk, 2010), which in my situation was the TVET context. Other studies in education indicated that through social cultural theory learners gain knowledge through social interaction and they internalise that knowledge to use independently in similar situations according to John-Steiner and Mahn (1996). Another study by Kelly (2006) emphasised that a sociocultural perspective on teacher learning highlights sharing ideas and fostering relationships with others. Hence, I used social cultural theory as I wanted to allow my students to gain knowledge of sexuality education and use this knowledge to act independently in different situations as well as share to ideas with each other.

My study included the developing of lesson plans and in compiling these lessons plans, the socio-cultural theory formed the basis on how the lesson was planned. It is necessary for lecturers to be aware of students' cultural contexts when designing activities for their lessons as Woolfolk (2010, p. 42) explains that the "socio-cultural theory emphasises the role in the development of cooperative dialogues between children and more knowledgeable members of society." She went on further stating that children absorb the culture of the community they grow up in, adopting the ways in which the community acts and behaves. To my understanding, as children grow up, they tend to learn things from their adults and behave in the same way as adults behave. They mimic the behaviours and learnings that were present during the growing-up phases of their lives.

I agree with the tenets of the socio-cultural theory, that society contributes to the way an individual develops especially because of what was said by Wood (2008, as cited in Beyers, 2011), who believed that we are shaped by our culture and our life experiences. Therefore, our behaviour is determined by what we experience and what we are taught. To my understanding, when a child is growing up, matters relating to culture, values, beliefs and principles are taught to the child. Harro (2008) explained that our families teach us how we should behave in a certain manner in a particular situation. As a child develops into an adult, these values and beliefs are already embedded in their lives and difficult to change. Therefore, whatever cultural practices the child has learnt from society, contributes towards their individual development and are brought into the learning environment. I believe that what the child learns on the outside, has a great influence on how the child learns in the classroom. By the same token the TVET sector students are adults who are in the classroom with embedded beliefs and values. Samaras and Freese (2011, p. 50) explain that “learning, thinking and knowing arise through collaboration and re-appropriating feedback from others which aligns with the socio-cultural theory.” The socio-cultural theory focuses on cultural beliefs and how these beliefs have an impact on learning. For example, I limited myself in terms of the pedagogical choices I made in my teaching practice because I grew up in a society where sexuality was regarded as taboo (see chapter three).

Also from the socio-cultural perspective, I came to understand that students and lecturers come from vastly different backgrounds and this contributes to the diversity in our classrooms and of the TVET sector. They all come into the learning environment with differences that need to be acknowledged and catered for. As Gerhard and Mayer-Smith (2008) explain, the socio-cultural theory is about understanding that learners and teachers come into the learning environment from vastly different backgrounds. This is also applicable to the TVET sector where the lecturers must aim to build a learning environment that accommodates diverse groups of students.

Lecturers come into the learning environment sometimes feeling uncomfortable about teaching sexuality education as confirmed by a study conducted by Beyers (2011) who found that teachers were comfortable in teaching only certain aspects of sexuality education. For example, teachers were able to teach the facts on HIV/AIDS, but they found it difficult teaching aspects of sex because of the way in which certain values were instilled in them when they were growing up. Since the TVET sector includes similar learning outcomes of sexuality education as that of the

school curriculum, lecturers share similar feelings as teachers in the schools about teaching sexuality education. Therefore, as a lecturer in the TVET sector, I did not feel comfortable teaching sexuality education as a topic, for no other reason than that society has had a great influence on my mental development, thought processes and beliefs.

### **Preliminary Literature Review**

I want to state that this study does not have an independent literature review chapter but literature is woven in the text across all chapters. This process is following the trend of similar self-study research projects.

In the following paragraphs, a short literature review of the topic is provided. The purpose of the short literature review is to highlight the two keys issues that my study is grounded in, namely:

- The teaching of sexuality education
- Suitable pedagogical approaches in teaching sexuality in classrooms.

### **The teaching of sexuality education**

Good sexuality education is very important in our present classroom teaching practices as this will pave the way for youth to become responsible sexual beings in society and be able to make responsible choices about their sexual relationships. According to Khau (2012, p. 412) sexuality education is described as a “life-long process of acquiring information and forming attitudes, beliefs and values about identity, relationships and intimacy.” She further explained that good sexuality education means that if learners are given the appropriate information about sexuality, this will develop their values, beliefs and attitudes about sexuality education, which will help shape their sexual identities.

I believe that it is proper sexuality education that moulds the student into becoming a social being and understanding what sexuality is all about. Sule (2015, p. 34) pointed out that “sexuality education comprises of factual knowledge.” This knowledge is therefore beneficial to assist parents and teachers educate their children on matters relating to sexuality education. It is also clarified by Sule (2015, p. 34) that “the knowledge also includes ways of helping children develop self-respect, sexual understanding, define the values on interpersonal relationships and strengthen

communication skills in sexuality.” On the contrary, Masinga (2007, p. 5) believes that “sexuality education is more than the facts of life.”

Appropriate sexuality education information is necessary in our TVET sector as students are surrounded by many issues that affect their attitudes and beliefs which impacts on their daily lives. According to Bhana (2018), at schools and educational institutions, young women and girls are facing burdens such as teenage pregnancy, sexual violence, HIV/AIDS and homophobia. In order for young people to make respectful and satisfying choices, sexuality education is needed in all phases of education (primary, secondary and tertiary) as emphasised by Sule (2015, p. 34) who noted that “sexuality education is also about developing young people’s skills so that they make informed choices about their behaviours and feel confident and competent about acting on these choices.” Likewise, UNESCO (2015) posits that the principle goal of sexuality education is that youth must become equipped with knowledge, skills and values to make responsible sexual choices in a world ravaged by HIV/AIDS.

Educating the youth of today in the TVET sector, on sexuality education will help students to become self-assured and knowledgeable about their sexuality and the social choices they make. According to Masinga (2009), young people should feel that they can acknowledge and share the sexual emotions that they experience and questions they have, so that they can have better control over their own destinies. I believe that sexuality education is an innate part of personhood, hence the sexuality education lecturer has the challenging task of helping students by providing the right framework for understanding the student’s humanity and sexuality. In agreement, is Torralba, Gutierrez and Garcia (2014) who believe that all aspects of the human person in the unity of his body and soul, is affected by sexuality.

Sexuality education is a core component in the TVET, LO curriculum. According to Francis (2010), LO is a learning area that was included in the TVET curriculum in the late 1990’s. Sexuality education was categorised as a key content area in this programme. LO comprises of a number of components such as health promotion, guidance, sexuality, physical development, human rights education and religious education. Francis (2010, p. 314) suggests that “bringing these fields under the umbrella of LO means that in South African schools, a whole range of skills

and qualifications are attached to teaching in this learning area.” In relating this to the TVET sector, I suggest that LO should be regarded as a discipline that requires certain expertise in order to deliver the curriculum effectively. It should therefore not be a subject that is given the least priority or being assigned unskilled staff to teach the content. Also, sexuality education should not be viewed as a separate subject or taught as a separate entity. In addition, lecturers should be trained on a continuous basis and upskilled in order to improve their teaching practice in sexuality education.

Sexuality education is included in our TVET sector and is here to stay and therefore it cannot be avoided in our teaching processes. Rather, as lecturers in this sector, we should ask ourselves the question on how we can improve our teaching practice of sexuality education in our daily teaching, in order for students to benefit. According to Swanepoel and Beyers (2019), sexuality education has become one of the main focus areas in the South African school space. These spaces also include TVET colleges and universities. This means that research in the field of sexuality education should be prioritised because there is a need to curb the risk of unsafe sexual practices. According to Leug, Shek, Leung and Shek (2019, p. 2) “sex education is conceptualised holistically with the goal of empowering youth to better understand their sexuality and relationships, which will ultimately improve adolescents’ sexual health and overall quality of life.” I understand that sexuality education does not only focus on one area of an individual’s health but rather on the total wellbeing. Good sexuality education lessons can empower youth to be good citizens and make the right choices that can impact positively on their lives.

In order to accomplish this, TVET lecturers are at the helm in ensuring that sexuality education lessons meet the desired outcomes. However, there are challenges that professionals experience with the teaching of sexuality education lessons. A study conducted by Swanepoel and Beyers (2019) on the teaching of sexuality in South African school spaces which includes the TVET sector, shows that while sexuality education is part of the South African education curriculum and should be prevalent in our classrooms, lessons are not achieving the desired results about creating awareness amongst students about their sexuality. Not all lessons are constructed, taught and presented in a way that students and lecturers are satisfied, that the final outcome of making students aware of and accepting their sexuality has been achieved. I gathered that there is a constant

need for teaching professionals to improve on their sexuality education teaching practice in order to reduce the negative comments made on teaching sexuality education content in our classrooms. As a result, I have taken a step further, to engage on this journey of self-study so I can explore pedagogical strategies in my teaching that will minimize the negativity surrounding the area of sexuality education. More importantly, this study will help me improve on my own sexuality teaching practice.

### **Suitable pedagogical approaches in teaching sexuality education in the classroom**

According to Kincheloe (2005, p. 53) “pedagogy determines how teachers think and act.” He believes that students’ lives and expectations are affected by pedagogy. He went on further to explain that pedagogy includes the process by which teachers and lecturers do their jobs. I came to understand that lecturers’ direction and focus on lessons is based on pedagogy.

Bhowmik and Banerjee (2013) refer to pedagogy as the art and science of teaching. They believe that there is no single, universal approach that suits all situations and therefore teachers should use an array of teaching strategies. Bhowmik and Banerjee (2013) also point out that because there are different groups of students, there should be different strategies used in different combinations for students to achieve the learning outcomes. Here, I view the socio-cultural perspective as being applicable, when it refers to the different groups of learners. This means that learners come from different cultural backgrounds and therefore different pedagogical strategies should be used in the teaching and learning process to improve classroom practice. Bhowmik and Banerjee (2013) further mention that pedagogy, incorporating a selection of appropriate teaching strategies that support intellectual engagement, connectedness to the wider world, supportive classroom environments and recognition of difference, should be implemented across all key learning and subject areas.

The pedagogical approaches used in the teaching of sexuality education content is very important in contributing to the transformation of knowledge. The transformation of knowledge requires adequate training in order to develop and adopt these pedagogies that are suitable and appropriate in teaching lessons on sexuality. According to UNESCO (2015, p. 8) “delivering high quality comprehensive sexuality education requires adequate training and capacity.” Despite this, lecturer training remains limited in scope and, if provided at all, is usually delivered through in-service

training programmes. Consequently, lecturers often feel uncomfortable and avoid discussing sensitive issues like sexual behaviour, sexuality, student access to contraception and support services. They also consistently do not use participatory methodologies to engage students fully in health and life skills education. I gleaned from the above findings that lecturers in educational institutions are inadequately trained in identifying the right pedagogical approaches to lesson delivery. I also ascertained that a variety of methodologies are not used when sexuality education is taught. My firm belief is that a wide variety of pedagogies are needed, to deliver lessons in sexuality education, so that students are fully engaged during the sexuality lessons.

Lecturers are at the forefront in ensuring that the right pedagogical approaches which stimulates students in having a passion for learning sexuality education, should be used in lessons. Sanjakdar et al (2015, p. 53) explains “in this frame, the effectiveness of the mobilisation and the manoeuvring of this subject within schools and in classrooms, is essentially based on pedagogy. A closer analysis of the intricate processes of how teacher pedagogies regulate sexual identities and sexual behaviour that becomes important to better understanding effective teaching of sexuality education.” By this, I understand that in order for the effective teaching of sexuality education, lecturers in the TVET sector should be fully responsible in the classroom for choosing the right pedagogy that will not only enhance the learning environment but will allow for full student participation. It is only through effective and relevant pedagogical approaches that these aims can be achieved in the learning process of sexuality education.

Improved pedagogical approaches requires lecturers to use creativity when designing learning activities. This will lead to the satisfaction in delivery of sexuality education. A study conducted by Haruna, Hu, and Ka Wah Chu (2018) showed that improved pedagogy on the use of gamification was effective in the transformation of knowledge. This influenced and increased students’ enjoyment and participation. From this, I gathered that the more creativity we implement and incorporate into our everyday pedagogy, the more desirable the results. Hence, I undertook this journey to explore my practice in teaching sexuality education with the aim of improving my pedagogical approaches and consequently improving my practice.

As a LO lecturer in the TVET sector, learning to be effective in my teaching of sexuality education in the classroom will depend on the pedagogical approaches I adopt. Therefore, even though pedagogy is about teaching, I believe it is clearly more than teaching. It involves learning and according to Kincheloe (2005), learning takes place inside and outside of schools and other institutions. In this study, the pedagogical approach will apply to “what” I teach and “how” I teach the content of sexuality education. Therefore adopting a socio-cultural perspective when identifying pedagogical approaches could result in improvement in my teaching of sexuality education and thus improve my practice.

### **Methodological approach**

The methodological approach used was self-study of practice. The study was qualitative in nature. Qualitative research investigates data, which is in form of words rather than numbers. According to Creswell (2007) “qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 37).

This implies that qualitative research investigates humans by working with participants in their surroundings and most importantly paying attention to their explanations. Correspondingly, I worked with my students in my classroom environment to improve on my current teaching practice of sexuality education. Working qualitatively, allowed me the opportunity to explore and thereby understand how my students interpret sexuality education in their environment.

Adopting a qualitative approach through self-study, has allowed me the space to reflect on areas of my own teaching practice. Hamilton and Worthington (2008, p. 236) defines “self-study as the study of one’s self, one’s actions, one’s ideas, as well as the not self.” Likewise, Schulte (n.d) explains that “one needs to stand in one’s own vulnerability in order for it to become strength.” From this, I concluded, that as a lecturer, I need to know and identify my weaknesses in my teaching practice. In so doing, I was able to reflect on my weaknesses and work towards building them into my strengths. By engaging in self-study research, I was drawn to areas that required attention in my classroom as I interacted with the sexuality education content in the curriculum. Interacting with the sexuality education content, I was allowed the space to view the different ways

of teaching the content which in turn had a great influence on my pedagogical choices and identifying areas in my teaching that needed to be changed.

Engaging in self-study research drew my attention to the areas in my teaching activities that needed more attention. In this case, it was the question of how my students respond to sexuality education and how my lived experiences could have contributed to the manner in which I teach the sexuality education component in the classroom. Self-study was appropriate for this research project as it opened up and gave sight to the blind spots I had as a lecturer. According to Masinga (2007, p. 9), “self-study is a way of looking at myself and my actions as an educator in an introspective manner.” Likewise, Samaras (2011) reminds me that with self-study, some of the hardest and most important work is working on one’s self. I believe that self-study can lead to self-discovery of knowing who I am as a lecturer. I am of the opinion that as a lecturer, I need to be efficient in getting my students to achieve the learning outcomes that relate to sexuality education and I feel that self-study will assist me in doing this. In agreement, is Samaras and Freese (2006, p. 3) who reiterate my feelings that “self-study is key to building teacher efficiency.” Consequently, I launched myself on this journey of self-discovery, to excavate the gaps in my pedagogical approaches and to narrow these gaps by repositioning myself as a sexuality education lecturer and thereby develop as a more effective lecturer in my TVET classroom.

To reposition myself in my practice, self-study played an important role in helping me gain a deeper understanding of how I was teaching sexuality education. To be able to reposition my teaching of sexuality, my critical friends contributed in a significant way, which is a crucial requirement in the self-study journey. I learnt that whilst a self-study is improvement-aimed with the researcher researching themselves, the road to improvement is not done in isolation. Self-study is primarily about reflecting on your practice in relation to others (La Boskey, 2004). The ‘others’ that La Boskey (2004) refers to, are called critical friends. In agreement, Hamilton and Pinnegar (2009) emphatically concur that self-study research does not mean working in isolation. A critical friend is someone who supports the researcher through this research process not only by lending a supportive, encouraging and empathetic ear, but also someone who engages with the researcher about the research at hand and offers critical and constructive feedback whilst engaging in meaningful dialogue about the research (Samaras, 2011). In the light of these valuable and

insightful comments, my critical friends played a noteworthy role in my research study, more of which will be discussed in detail in chapter two.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter one, I explained the focus, purpose and rationale of the study. The purpose of the study was how I could improve my sexuality education teaching practice, as I re-imagine my pedagogical approaches. Next, I outlined the background information of the study and gave a brief explanation of the TVET sector. This was followed by the three research questions which are central to this study. Further, the theoretical perspective that framed this study, namely the socio-cultural theory, was highlighted. A preliminary literature review was provided and the chapter concluded with a discussion on the self-study methodology that was adopted for this study.

**CHAPTER TWO**  
**THE ROAD LEADING TO CLASSROOM IMPROVEMENT ON SEXUALITY**  
**EDUCATION**

**Introduction**

This self-study research project was a journey of self-knowing and self-discovery as a LO lecturer. In chapter one, I discussed the beginning of this journey whereby I provided a description of all the important elements that were significant in this study such as the research questions, rationale and the methodology adopted in this study. In chapter two, the path that this self-study journey took will now be unveiled. The research methodology, the research setting and the participants in the study is revealed. Then, a data generation table is provided, outlining the data sources used. This is followed by a discussion on the ethical issues affecting this study. I also narrate how trustworthiness was established.

**Research methodology**

The methodological approach used in this research project is self-study of practice. According to Samaras and Freese (2006), the use of the words ‘self’ and ‘study’ is used as a yardstick to measure the reflections of teachers as they critically examine their actions as a way of developing professionally. As Pithouse-Morgan and Samaras (2015, p. 1) explain, “through self-study research, professionals seek out innovative and responsive ways of seeing, doing, and becoming.” Likewise, I examined my practice of teaching sexuality education in order to develop and improve in my profession and become a more productive lecturer. I came to know that self-study could bring about innovation in my teaching practice and help me to understand, that, as a professional, I must work on improving myself. Therefore, I agree with LaBoskey (2004) who explains that self-study research focuses on how teachers understand their teaching practice as they aim to improve it. Through engaging in self-study, I identified the gaps in how I was teaching sexuality education in my current teaching practice. Also, personal history self-study clearly helped me learn from my past experiences and prompted me to put into action, plans to transform myself.

Learning from my past experiences through self-study, contributed towards a reframed thinking of teaching sexuality education. Pithouse, Mitchell and Weber (2009, p. 45) affirms that “self-study is improvement-aimed and looks for, and requires evidence of, reframed thinking and

transformed practice of the researcher.” Russell (2002, as cited in LaBoskey, 2004) explains that self-study allows teachers to learn from their experiences and formulate new experiences for themselves and for their learners. Hence, self-study methodology was appropriate for my research as I looked back at my experiences and learnt from it, to develop as a more effective lecturer. Through this self-study research, I was encouraged to scrutinize my role as a lecturer and thereby examine my own teaching practice in relation to sexuality education teaching, in order to improve and develop both personally and professionally.

Also, Samaras and Freese (2006) identified the reasons why teachers embark on self-study research. These include personal growth and development, professional growth and development, classroom and school improvement. I understand that by undertaking self-study research, teachers like myself, become aware of the need for personal and professional development as well as improvement of their classroom practice. So, by adopting a self-study research approach, I became aware of the need for personal and professional growth with the aim of improving my practice. Besides professional growth, Samaras and Roberts (2011, p. 43) claim that “self-study allows teachers to plan, enact and assess their pedagogical strategies with the support and critique of professional colleagues while examining what is real and that which will make a direct impact in the classroom.”

Similar comments were made by Berry and Russel (2016) when they mention that through self-study, we work towards a more informed understanding of self and practice. I understood this to mean that self-study brings us together with ourselves in our practice. I view the self and practice working collaboratively as I believe they are connected because as lecturers, we need to understand ourselves first before we can understand our practice. It is only by understanding ourselves, can we understand our practice and improve it. Munby and Russel (1990) recommend that educators reinterpret and reframe their practice from different perspectives through reflective practice. Reflective practice actually propelled me down memory lane to explore how my personal history might have influenced my teaching practice. Bass, Anderson-Patton and Allender (2004, as cited in Austin and Senese, 2004, p. 914) claim that, “self-study offers us research that puts us back in touch with who we are, what we do, and we change to consciously be working on ourselves so that we are agents of change in our daily lives.” By the same token, Samaras, Hicks, and Berger (2004,

p. 910) explain that “personal history self-study entails the opportunity to disrobe, unveil, and engage in a soul-searching truth about the self while also engaging in critical conversations, and most importantly, continuing to discover the alternative viewpoints of others.” Personal history self-study assisted me in reflecting on my past learning experiences as it reminded me of who I am in relation to my practice.

For me to conduct my self-study research, openness was a critical element that was prevalent throughout my research process. As Samaras and Freese (2006, p. 29) explains, “self-study research requires openness and vulnerability since the focus is on the self.” Openness in my study required me to be truthful about my past learning experiences and also, be transparent about my teaching activities. As Samaras (2011, p. 221) advises, “self-study requires a transparent research process that clearly and accurately documents the research process through dialogue and critique.” I am of the opinion that by making it clear that my sexuality education teaching practice requires improvement, is indicative of my openness and my transparency in admitting that I’m not perfect in teaching sexuality education. As La Boskey (2004, p. 844) highlights that one of the characteristics of self-study methodology is being “improvement aimed,” I undertook this self-study journey seeking self-improvement.

### **Research Setting**

This research took place at a Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) college located in the city of Pietermaritzburg, in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. There is one public TVET college in Pietermaritzburg which is further divided into five campuses. Students apply for bursaries and those students who do not qualify, have to pay their own study fees. My research was conducted at one of the campuses located deep in the rural area. The campus is surrounded by a technical high school and two primary schools. The road leading to the campus has trees on either side and sometimes the branches fall on the passing cars. Whilst it is a rural campus, the essential amenities such as water and electricity are readily available. The campus is not well-resourced as compared to the other four campuses, which are located in urban areas. On campus, there are only two computer laboratories but they do accommodate all class groups. Some class groups consist of more than 35 students and the computer room caters for only twenty-five students per lesson. Some of the theory classrooms are also very small and students are sometimes

forced to sit very close to each other. Photocopy paper is scarce and lecturers are requested to use paper sparingly. The library is not fully equipped with the necessary resources such as books, computers, magazines, newspapers and other resources that will assist students in the completion of assignments and homework.

Therefore, both lecturers and students work under very strained circumstances, which further exacerbates the difficulties experienced in the learning and teaching environment.

### **Research participants**

Since this is a self-study, I was the main participant, as I researched ways in which I could improve my pedagogical choices. As the main participant I was able to draw directly from my teaching experiences (Samaras, 2011). I also worked with my students as participants in this study because they were part of my practice.

In my LO class, there were 25 NCV level two students who participated in this study. All the student participants were registered for the civil engineering programme. The group consisted of 15 black males and 10 black females. Their ages ranged between 16 to 45 years old. The majority of the students came from the surrounding areas, and they are all Zulu speaking, the prominent language of the black population in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Due to the entry requirement for the NCV programme, which is grade 9, the students came with different levels of educational achievement. Some of my students were school dropouts which was attributed to personal reasons and had not been in a classroom environment for three to five years. Others had not been in school for more than 10 years and some students are parents and some even grandparents. Amongst this group, there were also students who failed the Senior Certificate examination (matriculation examination) and enrolled in the NCV programme to further their education. In my study, these students, as my participants, were requested to provide feedback to me on their experiences of my sexuality education lessons and activities.

### **Critical friends**

Throughout my self-study journey, I did not work alone as I worked very closely with my critical friends. As Samaras (2011) points out, self-study research is not conducted alone, although it is

about the self. My critical friends were three of my colleagues from the campus who were qualified lecturers and have more than five years' lecturing experience and they also taught LO. The most important contribution that my critical friends made during my research process, was when they encouraged and advised me. According to Samaras and Roberts (2011, p. 43) "critical friends encourage and solicit respectful questioning and divergent views to obtain alternative perspectives, and they work to help validate the quality and legitimacy of each other's work." So too, my critical friends helped me to see my research process from other perspectives. For instance, when I was compiling my lesson plans, they gave me ideas on how I could introduce different pedagogical strategies to make sexuality education lessons interesting. They also advised me to reduce some of the activities for some learning outcomes as they mentioned that it was too much information for students to comprehend in one lesson. At times, during my research process, I felt alone, defeated and disillusioned but my critical friends encouraged me and my spirits were lifted to keep the momentum going. My critical friends were by my side at all times and ensured I did not stray from my study and kept me focused. For example, they would remind me about our meetings because sometimes, I used to forget.

During my research process, my critical friends gave me valuable input and offered support, encouragement and motivation when I needed it, to focus on my research. Pithouse, Mitchell and Weber (2009, p. 47) explain that "the support of caring, sensitive and interested critical friends to help us through the study can make it easier to remain open to further learning and professional development." My critical friends showed me that they care about me and that they were very interested to see me grow and become a better lecturer. This was evident in the motivation they provided during our meetings. They used to tell me that this study will open avenues for promotion for me, since it contributes to professional development. Costa and Kallick (1993, p. 50) mention that, "a critical friend takes time to fully understand the context of the work presented." I was indeed fortunate because my critical friends understood the context of my work being LO lecturers themselves at the same institution. Their input was invaluable throughout my study and this kept me on the right path.

Samaras (2011, p. 7) defines the two main roles of critical friends as being to "offer critique and provide support." This was so true in my case because on Mondays and Wednesdays, we used a

free lesson when we were all available to have our meetings. During these meetings, they continuously offered constructive criticism. For example, my critical friends advised me on getting a nurse to motivate and address students on sexuality. They also provided me with information about the nearby clinics where I could request a nurse to come to the campus and address my students on sexuality issues. My critical friends' support was continuous from the beginning as I engaged in this research study. They never left me alone and frequently wanted to know about the progress with my study.

### **Data generation**

I was guided by Samaras (2011) who mentions that self-study research projects allow for the use of a variety of techniques to generate data. I generated data using six techniques, namely, the collage, reflective journal writing, artefact retrieval, class activities, memory drawing and metaphors. Artefact retrieval and memory drawing took me to a place where I never thought I would go back. It helped me to retrace my memories of my lived experiences as I narrated my personal history. Reflective journal writing urged me to reflect on my sexuality education lessons whilst class activities revealed how students experienced my teaching of sexuality education. The collage and metaphors, stirred my imagination and this was the catalyst for extracting my learning from my personal history as well as my learning from my current sexuality education teaching practice. The collage was developed as part of an activity in class where students were required to speak about sexuality using images as a literary device. My data generation techniques are illustrated below in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1. Data generation

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Data generation activities</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Data Sources</b>
1. How have my lived experiences contributed to my pedagogical choices when I teach the sexuality component in the Life Orientation curriculum?	The collage Reflective Journal writing	Myself	Artefact Retrieval Reflective Journal writing The collage Memory drawing Metaphors
2. How do students experience and respond to my teaching of the sexuality education component of the Life Orientation curriculum?	The collage Reflective Journal writing	My students	Collage Classroom activities(prescribed curriculum)
3. What can I learn from my teaching experiences to improve my teaching practice of the Life Orientation curriculum?	The Collage Reflective Journal writing Metaphor	Myself Critical friends	Reflective Journal

### **Collage making**

In this study, I used the collage to address my first and second research questions. My first research question is:

*How have my lived experiences contributed to my pedagogical choices when I teach the sexuality component in the Life Orientation curriculum?*

To address this research question, I represented my learning from my personal history self-study using a collage (see chapter three). According to Vaughan (2005), the collage is a method of gathering, selecting, analysing and presenting a methodological process similar to traditional qualitative research. Furthermore, Butler-Kisber (2008) explain that a collage is used as a pedagogical approach with students in many different curricular areas. On a similar note, the collage helped me reflect on my learning from my lived experiences and thereby improve on my teaching activities.

To respond to my second research question, I also made use of a collage.

*How do students experience and respond to my teaching of the sexuality component of the Life Orientation curriculum?*

The collage inspired me to explore how my students interpret sexuality education. Gerstenblatt (2013) pointed out that the collage provides researchers an alternative method to represent stories and gives participants an opportunity to articulate their experiences using selected materials and texts. I used the collage as a means of interrogating the identities and values of the students through images as the collage can communicate meaning in ways that words cannot (Burns, 2003). The collage allowed students to express themselves through images where words failed.

In expressing themselves through images, students were required to cut and paste pictures onto a board (see chapter five). According to Butler-Kisber (2008), “collage is a process of cutting and sticking found images and image fragments from popular printed magazines onto cardboard” (p. 265). Students worked in groups as they constructed a collage that represented situations that lead to risky sexual encounters. The pictures symbolised situations that they believe were risky and could be dangerous to them. Since this activity involved a lot of cutting and pasting as well as group work, students were very actively involved in completing the collage.

## **Reflective Journal Writing**

Reflective journal writing was a tool that guided me in my self-discovery process. According to Rager (2005), reflective journal writing captures feelings and shapes emotions that support reflexivity. Penning my thoughts and feelings about my the teaching process was something I never did in the past. That is why I concurred with Masinga (2012) who explained that she had to learn, that writing in her journal was part of her learning curve she had to go through, to express her thoughts and feelings throughout the process. Furthermore, journaling is used as an “evidence gathering tool” (Pinnegar and Hamilton, 2009, p. 123). In my study, I used the journal to:

- document my critical friends’ inputs
- record my observations and reflections of each lesson
- record my thoughts about my self-study journey
- record my reflections on my classroom experiences

(Cochan-Smith & Lythe, 1993)

I once again identified with Masinga (2013) when she explained that through journaling, she had an opportunity to be true to herself which rang so well with me when this process of journal writing acted as an avenue for identifying my true self as an individual and as a lecturer. Writing my thoughts in a journal was a free-willed process and therefore not judged or criticised in anyway because there is no symbol of achievement attached to a reflective journal. As Pithouse et al (2009) explain, the use of journals provides a platform where a teacher can write about their own ideas informally, without being judged and not conforming to any structure or layout of a certain genre. That is why I was able to write about my feelings and experiences knowing that there was no formal structure that must be adhered to. For instance, in the middle of a lesson, whilst students were engaged in the learning process, I jotted down key points, which I expanded on after the lesson. My journal was kept in my handbag and each time I had a thought or reflection I wrote it down. Journal writing for me was an emotional process as I relived the good times and the bad times from my past. I believe that memories cannot always be good or happy as sad experiences do occur. Even Madondo (2014, p. 20) affirms this by putting forward that “writing and reliving some emotional experiences sometimes helps you to heal the inner soul and can provide you with new meaning at that point in time.”

### **Artefact retrieval**

I made use of artefact retrieval to understand and learn from my past experiences. According to Allender and Manke (2004, p. 20), artefacts are objects that can offer “tangible evidence of the realities of teaching and learning.” They further elaborated that artefact retrieval provides an opportunity to revisit our educational journeys and learn from the past to inform our current teaching. As Brogden (2008, p. 857) elucidated, “artefacts are historical remains, and most of the time are found in file drawers and dirty boxes.” At first, it seemed like an easy task to look through drawers and search for objects that had meaning in my lived experiences. However, I was wrong because it was not easy as I had assumed. Sometimes, I searched through drawers and found nothing. I even went further by asking my mother if she could remember where we kept old photographs. Eventually, I found some objects such as my school monitor badge and old photographs that I believe was beneficial as I narrated my personal history (chapter three).

Artefact retrieval also assisted me in responding to my first research question:

*How have my lived experiences contributed to my pedagogical choices when I teach the sexuality component in the Life Orientation curriculum?*

Looking at the different objects I found, took me back to my primary and secondary school days. The different objects were not just objects but instead, it symbolised something and had meaning and a story to tell (Cole, 2011). Some stories were pleasant and some were not. However, it was about understanding my past learning experiences and how these experiences connected with my self-discovery journey. Thus, artefact retrieval was beneficial to my study as it brought back memories and showed me how these memories have influenced my sexuality education teaching practice.

### **Class Activities**

Classroom activities also formed part of my data collection process to answer my second research question:

*How do students experience and respond to my teaching of the sexuality component of the Life Orientation curriculum?*

According to Murphy and Ribarsky (2013), activities for teaching sexuality in the university (tertiary) classroom is made up of a collection of innovative and active learning exercises. This

meant that in my study, my activities were innovative and encouraged students to actively participate in the learning environment since the college is also used in tertiary education. The different activities that were designed to teach sexuality education and enhance the learning environment, comprised a variety of active learning exercises. Some of these activities were role-plays, educational videos and case studies (chapter four and five). My activities were designed to generate student interest in sexuality education topics and also enabled me to broach what were often, sensitive issues in the classroom (Murphy & Ribarsky, 2013).

### **Memory drawing**

Memory drawing evoked memories of episodes from my personal history. I was petrified of using drawing since I am not good at drawing. Fortunately, I was reassured by Pithouse (2011) who explains that researchers should remember that what is crucial is the new ideas and meaning the drawings generate rather than how well one can draw.

Drawing a sketch of my brothers and myself playing on a race-car track (chapter three), brought back a very delightful memory since it was a happy moment. Had it not been for the memory drawings, I would have never visualised that pleasant moment when writing my personal history. So, memory drawing awakened thoughts about my past experiences that came to life in the sketch.

### **Making meaning (data analysis and interpretation)**

For my study, the data analysis was inductive. I engaged inductively with data generated in response to each of my research questions to search for relations, patterns and meanings that would allow me to answer my research questions (Nieuwenhuis, 2010). Samaras (2011) also mentions that inductive data analysis occurs by coding the data into categories to help sort descriptive data by topic. Hence, I examined the generated data with the aim of identifying what it was I was learning, as possible ways of improving how sexuality education issues are taught in my classroom. As Butler-Kisber (2008) explained, “collage can be used as a helpful way of conceptualising a response to a research question” (p. 270), so I represented my learning from my personal history in the form of a collage (chapter three). Discussing and presenting my collage to my critical friends and my supervisor helped me to understand my learning from my personal history.

To make meaning of my learning in chapter three, a metaphor, brought to light that which otherwise was not so clearly visible. To my understanding, a metaphor is a picture or symbol that gives a deeper understanding of the situation. That is why I concur with Bullough (1994) that “metaphors are a useful means for helping teachers think about themselves as teachers and is an important tool to assist them to become increasingly reflective about their actions in the classroom” (p. 109).

### **Ethical considerations**

Whilst I was the principle participant in my self-study research project, there were other participants who were directly involved in my study. These participants contributed positively to my study and also played a monumental role. Therefore, I needed to be aware and perform my ethical responsibility as a researcher. I first requested and obtained ethical clearance from the university where I am registered for my qualification. A completed ethical clearance form together with the necessary attachments were forwarded to the research ethics committee for approval. Due to my research being a self-study, permission had to be sought and granted by the Office of the Principal and Campus Manager of the TVET College where I am employed as a lecturer.

I also explained to my students about their involvement in my research study and the role they would play in the entire research process. I emphasised to my students that they had a right to

decline to participate in the study without any consequences should they not want their work to feature in my research thesis (Parry & Mauthner, 2004). However, they would still have to complete the work as this was part of their curriculum but I would not use it in my study.

To seek informed consent from my participants, I wrote letters requesting consent to use their data in my study. I informed them that their data from classroom activities will be used in a way that respects their dignity and privacy. In the letters of consent, I explained to my participants, that their names will not be used in the study.

A consent letter was drafted and sent to my critical friends requesting permission to use their discussions and comments in my study. Samaras (2011, p. 45) stated that a researcher must develop an awareness about how to gain information while respecting human dignity, individual lives, and their psychological and physical well-being. Thus, it was important for me as the researcher to always maintain confidentiality of my participants and to guarantee that my data does not include identifiable information. I identified with Samaras (2001) who believes that every person is unique and worthy of respect by ensuring that I did not bring any harm to my participants. All participants were protected and all information was treated with the strictest confidentiality.

### **Trustworthiness**

According to Feldman (2003), validity and trustworthiness is established by giving very clear and detailed explanations of what data sources are used and how data is collected and analysed. Samaras (2011) confirms this by elucidating that using different data sources, strengthens the trustworthiness of a self-study. By using a variety of data generation sources such as collage, the reflective journal and artefact retrieval, I attempted to establish trustworthiness in my study.

I also followed the guidelines and advice of Feldman's (2003) by giving detailed explanations of how my data sources were used and how my data was analysed. Feldman (2003, p. 26) also advised that "although it may be impossible to show that the findings of educational research are true, they ought to be more than believable—we must have good reasons to trust them to be true." To show that my work is believable and can be trusted, I have given details of each research practice I used. Similarly, Lahman et al (2010) elaborated that if the reader finds the piece of writing moving and touching, then trustworthiness is somewhat achieved.

## **Challenges in the study**

Challenges in the study are factors that prevent the free flow, smoothness and completion of the study. Challenges can also affect the duration of the lessons that are part of the research study, resulting in lesson content being taught or presented in the next lesson. I experienced a challenge with the resources that were used in the lesson to create the collage. We had newspapers and magazines but my students brought to my attention, that there were not enough pictures in these magazines that related to risky sexual situations. Fortunately, in our library, there were bundles of old newspapers which I gave to students to continue with their classwork.

Another challenge was the availability of the nurse to come to campus to motivate my students. The nurse's day off was on a Sunday and I do not have classes during the weekend. She then spoke to her manager who allowed her to come to campus during the time of my lesson.

Internet connectivity and load shedding were also a challenge. I requested the load-shedding schedule from the municipality for planning purposes and worked around it.

Methodologically I initially struggled to place the self as the focus point as positioned by the self-study method. I moved between focus on myself and the students. It was through constant engagements with my supervisor and critical friends that kept me on track. I was constantly reminded that the practice that was under scrutiny was my own and the improvement intended was that of my own practice too.

Journal writing was a challenge for me at the beginning. I did not know exactly what information I was supposed to record. As my study progressed, I realised that every moment of my journey must be documented, especially considering that sexuality education is a sensitive topic and my thoughts and feelings about how my lessons unfolded, should be documented. I then decided to use my break time at work between teaching and evenings to write in my journal. Despite the challenges that impeded my research process to an extent, I was fortunate in overcoming them and I now believe that they were not impediments, but rather challenges for me to address with my new-found personal growth and development.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this chapter covered the research methodology adopted in the study, which was self-study of practice. I then described my research participants and the research setting. I constructed a table to illustrate the data gathering methods used in the study. I further gave an

account of the ethical issues related to this study and I expanded on the challenges experienced during my research process. In this chapter, a very important lesson was learnt and that lesson taught me that the most difficult but important work is working on one's self. I also learned that the value and purpose of conducting self-study research is for personal and professional growth and development as well as classroom improvement. I realised that if I wished to seek change and improvement in facilitating sexuality education, I, myself, must become the change.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THROUGH MEMORY STORIES, MY LEARNING UNFOLDED**

#### **Introduction**

The focus of this self-study research was on how I can improve my classroom practice of teaching sexuality education. My aim was to learn from my past experiences of sexuality education to improve on my current teaching practice. In chapter two, I discussed my research methodology and gave a comprehensive summary of my research setting as well as my research participants. Importantly, I described my data-generation tools and explained how they were used in the study. I described the ethical clearance process for this study and showed how I attempted to establish trustworthiness in the research study. Finally, I highlighted the challenges I experienced during my research process and how I overcame them.

In this chapter, I am responding to my first research question:

*How have my lived experiences contributed to my pedagogical choices when I teach the sexuality education component in the life orientation curriculum?*

Narrating my life story was a cathartic experience, more so, after I read LaBoskey (2004, p. 843) who said that “the assumption is that the accuracy of our memories does not matter: whatever shape they take, they influence the construction of our identities, our current thinking, and our future behaviour.”

#### **The story of my life: Being raised in a multiracial family**

In responding to this first research question, I recalled my past lived experiences on sexuality education with the intention of understanding how my lived experiences contributed to how I teach sexuality education and the role my lived experiences played in my teaching practice. To achieve this, I journeyed back to my childhood to write my personal history, as I engaged with artefacts from my lived experiences and reflected on my memories. In this personal history

narrative, I share important episodes and experiences that may have contributed to improving my sexuality education teaching practice. As LaBoskey (2004) mentioned, if we begin to rekindle our memories, we would have control of our teaching environment and therefore our memories will have an impact on our teaching. Hence, through remembering, I began to understand how my lived experiences contributed to my pedagogical choices when I teach the sexuality education component in my classroom. Figure 3.1 is a photograph of my multiracial family taken at a cousin's wedding.



Figure 3.1 A photograph of my multiracial family taken at a cousin's wedding

I am told that it was a rainy Friday afternoon on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1983, in the midst of the apartheid<sup>1</sup> era, when a beautiful baby girl was born in Pietermaritzburg. Looking at this photograph, I see my family as a symbolic example of South Africa's rainbow nation because I was born into a multiracial, multicultural home with my paternal grandmother being black,

---

<sup>1</sup> Apartheid was the ideology supported by the National Party (NP) government and was introduced in South Africa in 1948. Apartheid called for the separate development of the different racial groups in South Africa.

my father a coloured man and my mother an Indian women.<sup>2</sup> Growing up in a multiracial home meant that we brought together different identities, cultures, and beliefs. My immediate family comprised of five members, my parents, two older brothers and me, the youngest and only girl in the family.

My father was the youngest son in his home and had eight siblings. He always mentioned to me, that growing up for him was never easy and his mum struggled to educate her children. He had to drop out of school in grade ten previously known as standard eight, to find employment. My mum was the second eldest daughter amongst five siblings. Due to the hard times she also encountered, she did not have the opportunity to complete her schooling. She dropped out of school in grade nine previously known as standard seven. Although, both my parents did not have the opportunity to complete their schooling, they valued education and always encouraged us to never stop learning.

My mother used to share stories of her upbringing with me. She had two older brothers who constantly monitored her every move including what she wore. One of the stories she shared was when she was a teenager, her elder brother came home from work and found her wearing a blouse that showed off her stomach. Upon seeing her, he gave her a slap and immediately instructed her to go and change her blouse. According to my mum, my maternal grandmother was also strict and old fashioned. She never allowed my mother to wear dresses that were above the knee or clothing that showed off her body. Hence, I have come to understand where the values and beliefs my mother tried to instil in me, came from. Whilst growing up, whenever topics related to sexuality came up, the atmosphere would become uncomfortable because aspects of sexuality were not spoken about with my mother during her childhood. Therefore, in our home, sexuality became a difficult and uncomfortable topic. Reflecting on this, I have come to the conclusion that the discomfort of sexuality conversations in our home must have been the same in my mother's home as well. Figure 3.2 is the house I lived in as a child.

---

<sup>2</sup> During the apartheid era, the South African population was divided along racial lines into different racial groups namely white, black, coloured and Indian and had to live in areas designated for each population group.



Figure 3.2 The house I lived in as a child

Our home was a one-roomed house that was situated in an Indian suburb. The houses were not fancy and attached to other houses where other families lived. The disadvantage of having an attached house was that every conversation that took place on one side of the house, could be clearly heard by the neighbours. Whenever our neighbours fought or spoke loudly, we could hear everything. Therefore, we refrained from shouting or having loud conversations with each other, as we did not want our neighbours to overhear.

My parents divided the one room into two. My brothers and I slept on one side and my parents on the other side. On our side of the room, we had a bunk bed that has two beds, one above the other. I slept on the top bunk bed and my brothers slept at the bottom. Sometimes I wanted to sleep at the bottom because I found the bottom bed cosy. My brothers would refuse as they explained to me that they were too heavy to be sleeping on the top bed. Inside the house, we had a very small kitchen where my mother prepared all the good food. There was no kitchen sink so I used to help my mother carry dishes outside, to be washed in the backyard. I was fourteen years old when my dad installed a kitchen sink for my mother. I remember how happy the family was because there was no need for us to go outside to wash dishes or drink water anymore.

We had an outside toilet with no geyser, so during those icy cold winter mornings, my mother used to heat water on the stove and I would stand naked on the ice-cold cement as she bathe

me. In winter, it was so cold that I used to sleep with socks and a warm woollen hat that kept me warm. Due to the cold, I became very ill with bronchitis and asthma and I spent lots of time in the hospital. My father and mother used to walk to the hospital in the evenings through a cemetery, just to see me during visiting times. The hospital was situated about ten kilometres from home and walking through the cemetery, was a shorter route. During summer, the house was so hot due to the asbestos roof, that we could barely fall asleep. To keep ourselves cool, we used to mix a powder called cool-aid with water and freeze this into little iced blocks.

I was raised in a Christian home and growing up was not easy as there were certain Christian practices we had to follow. One of those was attending Sunday school on Sunday mornings. As little as I was, my mother used to wake me up, brush my hair into beautiful curls and secure them with colourful hairbands and send me along with my brothers to church for Sunday school. She used to tell my brothers to look after their sister and my brothers took care of me very well because I never came to any harm.

At Sunday school, I learnt how to pray and I enjoyed listening to bible stories. Some of the bible stories I remember well was, Noah and the Ark as well as Adam and Eve. After Sunday school, I used to sit in the front row bench at church waiting for my mother to come for the Sunday service. In my family, there were no excuses for not attending church on a Sunday morning.

My mother is a very pious person and a no-nonsense mother. From her teachings, I learned that women must never wear a pair of pants in church and a scarf must be worn on the head. The appropriate dress code for the church must be a long dress or a skirt and blouse that fully covered the upper body. I never really understood the reasoning for this at that time because I was too young. Even on winter mornings when I wanted to wear a pair of pants or jeans, my mother would not allow me to do so. As I grew older, she explained that the reason for not wearing pants or jeans is out of respect. Also, if a man is seated in the back row of the church, they must not look at your bottom with admiration in church. Those teachings stayed with me, even now, as a practicing lecturer. At college, I always call the girls when I notice they are dressed inappropriately and I speak to them and tell them to cover up their bodies. Through this journey to my past, I now discern that it was because of what I was taught by my mother about dressing properly, I react the way I do.

The only time we were allowed to stay at home on a Sunday morning was, if we were sick. Every Sunday after church, we used to jump into the church bus which we enjoyed because we were the last ones to get dropped off. We enjoyed being dropped off last and we considered it as an “extra ride” since my father did not have a vehicle. Sunday lunch was at my maternal grandmother’s house. It used to be exciting playing with my cousins and just being in a comfortable big house with the toilet inside and running hot water which was a luxury to me.

### **Good girls always stay clean**

My brothers and I got along well but at times I used to get them into trouble by telling stories about them to my parents about things that they did, which I felt were wrong. For example, I caught my elder brother with a cigarette and ran straight to my mother to tell on him. My father used to discipline my brothers with a smack or two. However, when I used to misbehave, my punishment included scolding, being grounded (forced to stay in my room) and no pocket money. Looking back now, I see that boys were generally perceived to be more mischievous than girls and that is why, my father disciplined them differently as compared to me. Beyers (2011, p. 204) provides the following explanation for this, “from birth, daughters are usually regarded as softer and more fragile than their male counterparts.” Hence, my parents disciplined me differently because they saw me as being soft and fragile. I reasoned that this was because they believed boys were stronger, therefore, they had to be punished with a hiding when they misbehaved. On the other hand, when girls misbehaved, the punishment took the form of withdrawing some privileges because girls were perceived as being weaker.

In our backyard, we had a guava tree and my brothers used to teach me how to climb the tree. One day I fell off the tree and got hurt. That afternoon, when my father got back from work, my mother explained to him what had happened. He smacked both my brothers and said, “*She is a girl, I warned you not to teach her to climb the tree.*” I felt sorry for them because I did not like to see my brothers being shouted at for misbehaving. Furthermore, they did not force me to climb the tree and I was having fun with them. I wanted to be with them all the time and enjoyed playing games with them. During those years, I did not have any girls as friends and my brothers were my only friends. Being with my brothers made me feel good because I liked their company. My favourite games with them used to be playing with marbles and playing in the sand with their cars. My second brother would make a racing track all around the guava tree out of sand. Then, the three of us used to pick a car from his toy box and using our hands, we pretended to be race-car drivers and drive along the race track. Whilst playing this game,

we used to make sounds using our lips like race-cars. Figure 3.3 below is a memory drawing of my brothers and I playing on our race track.

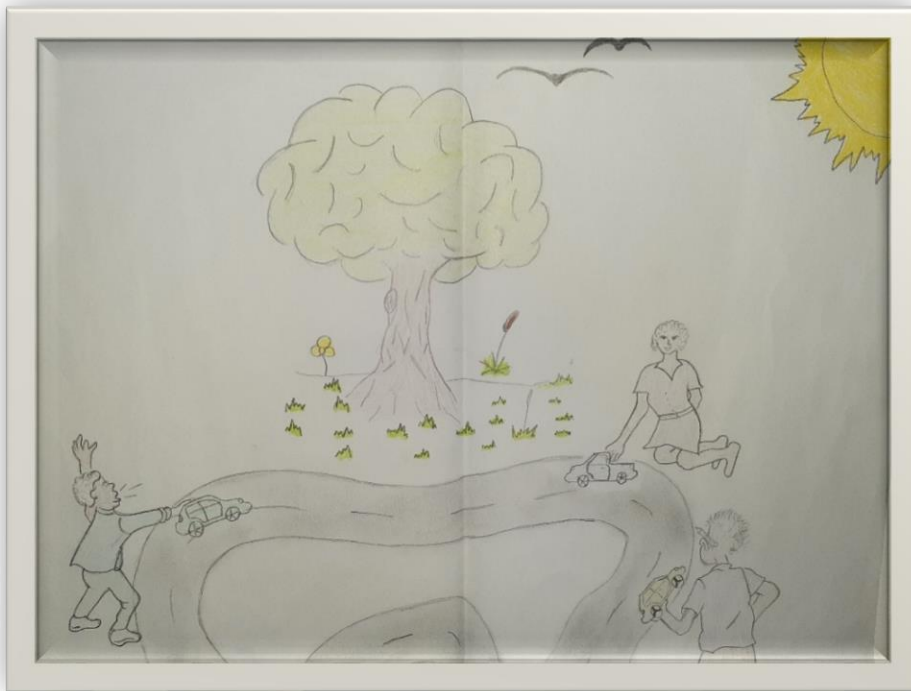


Figure 3.3 A memory drawing of my brothers and I playing on our race track

My mother used to come outside and see the dirt on my clothes and immediately she used to bathe me and keep me inside the house and lock the gate. I would fuss and moan about it but there was nothing I could do. I wanted to remain outside and continue having fun with my brothers. I knew that if I was indoors, I was going to be alone for some time and being indoors alone was boring for me. I thought that the activities that my brothers were engaging in on the

outside, were exciting and I did not want to be left out. My mother never explained to me her reasons for her actions as to why she did not want me to be outside and get dirty. I came to my own conclusion and realised that girls are seen as soft and vulnerable and not allowed to be part of activities that are meant for boys. The impression that was created for me, was that girls must always be kept clean.

Another game we played together which we also enjoyed was making aeroplanes out of coloured paper. Once the aeroplanes were complete, we used to hold them up and pretend we were in the sky and the clouds were preventing us from reaching our destination. Some days we travelled to more than five destinations in our imagination. Figure 3.4 is an example of the aeroplanes we made from coloured paper.



Figure 3.4 An example of the aeroplanes we made from coloured paper

### **Developing into a teenager**

From the age of 10, I started to notice changes in my body. I was in the process of reaching adolescence. Papathandsiou & Lahana (2007, p. 4) define adolescence as the “ultimate phase of development, the last stage of the individual during his or her course towards maturity.” One of these changes was the beginning of my menstrual cycle which was kept a secret. Lahana

(2014) explains that family attitude towards menstruation is different. In some families, the first menstruation becomes a family celebration whilst in some families, it is kept a secret. My first menstruation was kept a secret from some of my extended family members that included my aunts, uncles and cousins.

My mother spoke to me and informed me about all the physiological changes that will take place in my body. Parents play an important role in educating their children about sexuality. However, the only things that my mother told me were that my breasts will start to develop and my hips will get bigger. This is all the information I got from her. Grossman, Jenkins and Richer (2018) state that parents conversations with their children can play a critical role in improving their knowledge about sexuality education. Alas, for me, this was not the case. When my mother started speaking to me about these issues, I felt very awkward and uncomfortable as I listened to her. I believed I had these kinds of emotions because my mother and I never spoke about such things before. We did not have an open relationship about sexuality and therefore speaking about sensitive topics such as my menstrual cycle made me feel uncomfortable. Grossman, Jenkins and Richer (2018) mention that some parents experience challenges when communicating effectively with their teenagers about sex. This was the same for my mother and I, as we did not communicate about issues relating to sexuality and sex.

As a teenager, I was scared of my mother and certain words such as penis, vagina, and sex were all regarded as taboo and not allowed to be mentioned. I was taught that those words are rude. My genitals were referred to as a “cookie” by my mother. At that time, she never gave me an explanation as to why those words were rude and neither did I ask her. As I grew older, I deduced, that because of my mother’s culture and the way she was taught in her teenage years, she treated me in the same manner. According to UNESCO (2009, as cited in Beyers, 2011), parents are reluctant to talk about sex to their teenage children because of their cultural norms or discomfort. My mother grew up in a traditional Indian home. Her parents never spoke to her about sex. Hence, my mother never spoke to me about sexuality and sex. I assumed that she was taught that sex is for adults and that is why she never spoke to me about sex. This is in line with Beyers (2011) who explained, that adult’s use a language that children do not understand because they feel that sex is only for adults. Even at the age of 14, I had no idea about sex. My close friend from secondary school and I had a good laugh when I expressed to her that I did not know anything about sex. We had a good friendship from grade eight and enjoyed each other’s company. She was the one who explained to me how sex happens and

how the male genitals enters the female genitals. To me, it was hilarious and I could not stop laughing as she continued to give me more explicit sex-related information. We both were young at that time and the information she gave me, I now understand, was not all true and this can be dangerous as Beyers (2011) warns, because if youth depend on the knowledge of peers about sex, this can be detrimental for the HIV/AIDS pandemic in South Africa because the youth in their naivety will not know about taking precautions and having safe sexual relations.

As a teenager, I was taught never to speak to boys on the street corners but my brothers were able to speak to girls anywhere they wished. Again, no explanation was given to me then, as to why I must not socialise with boys on the street corners. I believe that my parents were afraid that something untoward would happen to me such as being pressurised into having unprotected sex or being raped by someone. Figure 3.5 below is a photograph of my parents.



Figure 3.5 My beautiful parents

I recall that when I brought friends home from school, my parents always wanted to know a little history about them. They believed that associating with the wrong company will have a negative influence on me and the wrong friends will influence me into doing things that I did

not want to do. My mother always said, “*Bad company corrupts good character.*” Perhaps, this is the reason they would not allow me to be friends with girls whom they thought, would have a negative influence on my decisions.

As a young girl, I did not fully understand or appreciate my parents’ attitudes and thinking. I used to sulk and not talk to them for a while if I was caught doing something wrong and punished. I remember when I played truant from school with my friend and went to the museum. She persuaded me to do this and I joined her not realising the consequences of our actions. The school found out and we were suspended for three days. When my parents found out, they were furious with me and made it clear that I must not be friends with her anymore and that made me angry. I felt that she was my friend and I did not agree with my parents’ decision. At that time, I believed I was old enough to choose my own friends and I did not appreciate my parents deciding who my friends should be.

My parents were not wealthy but they had enough money just to make ends meet. Since my older brothers were teenagers at that time, my father could only afford to buy them clothes for Christmas. Sometimes, there was not enough money to buy anything for me and I had to go without. What comes to mind is the time when my father did not have the money to buy me a new pair of shoes and that year I had to wear the same old shoes. I used to look at all the girls and admire their clothing and all the nice things they had and I wished that I could also have the same. I used to feel sad and think that they had everything and I did not.

The Christmas season was the time we looked forward to the most because that was the only period when we received new clothing. When the school closed for the last term, I used to count the days before Christmas. Two weeks before Christmas, my parents used to take my brothers and I into the town and those moments were breath-taking for me. Christmas was so exciting and I could not wait to wear my new dress and eat sweets and chocolates. Our home was always filled with love, laughter, caring and sharing, despite the fact that we did not have much. This experience of caring and sharing has become one of my core values in life, which I learnt from my parents.

We used to walk to the shops as a family to buy our weekly supplies. It was exhausting but we had no choice. Sometimes, my brothers and my father used to walk twice a day in the blistering sun when we needed supplies. I can recollect that the shopping centre was like a buzzing

market. My mother used to look for all the bargains and buy small quantities of each vegetable for the week ahead. The gloomiest moment was when our neighbours used to pass us on the road in their fancy cars. We wished they would stop and take us in their cars but they would just drive past us as if we were strangers. At times, I wondered if they were ashamed to have us be seen in their cars because we were poor or maybe they did not want their car to get dirty. I even wondered if it was because my mother, an Indian woman, married a coloured man and they viewed us differently because we lived in a predominantly Indian community. At that time, marrying out of your racial group, especially if the other person was white, was prohibited by law, and also frowned upon. Whatever the reason may have been, I will never know, but I said to myself that I would never treat poor people the way we were treated. I believe that the time we spent walking to the shop was well spent because we got to be together as a family and that is something our fancy neighbours will never be able to take away from us.

#### **My primary school years: The fear of starting my schooling**

In 1989, I was getting ready for a new chapter in my life –going to class one (grade one). This was scary as well as thrilling for me as mixed emotions ran through my mind. I was nervous and the only thought I had was, who was going to be my friend. That thought terrified me because if I had no friends and was considered an outcast at school, I will be very lonely. The only reason I thought that, at that time, was because I had no friends because I was an introvert which made it difficult for me to meet people and socialise.

Nevertheless, I had to go to school. My father bought my school uniform but could not afford to buy me the school blazer, so I went without it. Throughout my schooling career, I did not own a blazer but that did not stop me from learning. At times, I became resentful to see how the other girls were dressed in their blazers and it looked so good on them. Waking up in the morning with tears in my eyes and getting dressed for my first day of school, was emotional for my parents. My father refused to take me to school because he knew if he was around, I will surely cry, because I was daddy's little girl. Nevertheless, off to school I went, with my two slices of lunch, one colouring book and a box of crayons packed in my new school bag. Figure 3.6 is a photograph of my school bag.



### Figure 3.6 My school bag

Entering this big school gate with lots of children crying, screaming and holding on to their parents, refusing to stay at school, I was crying silently, tears rolling down my cheeks. Surprisingly, my mother was asked by one of the teachers to take me to the principal's office to verify my registration. There were so many parents around and they were very inquisitive as to what was going on. Holding my mother's hand and walking towards the principal's office, made me even more frightened. Only, after the principal had spoken with my mother, I realised that it was my race that was an issue at the school. My mother explained to me that the school principal recognised me as coloured and refused to register me in the school because this school was for Indian children only. The principal insisted I attend a school for coloured children. My mother was discouraged and pleaded with the principal to have me registered. After much deliberation between my mother and the principal, he then agreed to let me go home and come back after a week. One week of staying at home was a very sad and confusing time for me because I used to see all the children in the neighbourhood attending school whilst I was not. I was confused. After all, I did not understand why I had to stay at home because I wanted to go to school and learn. My mother told me that I asked her many questions such as, "*Will you take me to another school? Why does the school principal not like me?*" After a week, the principal grudgingly enrolled me temporarily at the school and he made it explicitly clear to my mother, that my registration was only temporary. It was only after a harrowing month, that my registration in this primary school was confirmed.

On my first day, I walked into the class nervously and the teacher directed me to my seat. Surprisingly, I made friends very quickly and enjoyed being at school for that day. At school, there was a certain dress code that children had to abide by and one of them was that girls with

long hair had to have two plaits. The texture of my hair was different compared to that of the Indian girls and therefore the two plaits was not going to work on my hair. My mother explained to the teacher that she could not put my hair in two plaits but rather one but the teacher did not want to hear anything and was adamant. I never liked my class one teacher as I thought she was racist. She was Indian and I felt she preferred the Indian children in the class, over me. She also gave more attention to the children from affluent backgrounds as compared to the poorer children in the class.

In primary school, most of our learning activities involved working in pairs and I did not like it. The pairs included one boy and one girl. When the teacher changed our places to work in groups, I refused to sit next to a boy. I believed boys are just naughty and I did not want to be associated with bad behaviour. I remember when we had to learn about sexuality and the physiological differences between males and females, the boys sniggered and made funny noises such as “oooooh” and laughed continuously. They never gave the teacher a chance to teach us about those topics. They found the topic more amusing than educative, not realising the significance of the content being taught. The teacher stopped teaching us because she could not tolerate the boys’ reaction to sexuality education. I felt very disappointed because the girls in the class were all seated quietly and wanted to learn but no learning took place.

As I approached standard four (grade six) and standard five (grade seven) the negative behaviour of boys in lessons started to decline. As I reflect on some lessons in these particular grades, I remember that some teachers incorporated games into our lessons. Sometimes, games were used in our life skills lessons and even in our mathematics lessons. In the mathematics lesson, quizzes were used and the learner who guessed the right answer first, received a sweet. During these lessons, the boys were very well behaved and interested in learning the prescribed content. I believe that the boys had started to mature and therefore their interest was piqued about sexuality issues. Another contributing factor was the different teaching pedagogies that the teachers were using to teach the class about sexuality which played a huge role in the change in attitude of the boys in the class.

### **Secondary School years: The last cycle of my schooling**

Attending high school, I felt very different. I sometimes felt embarrassed because my breasts started developing and I had to wear a bra. At times, the boys used to come from behind and pull the girls’ bra straps. The straps of the bra stung the skin on the back causing a painful

feeling. The boys in high school were very naughty and ill-disciplined. My feelings were if this is how boys behave, then I will never get married.

During the lunch breaks, when all the girls were together, we used to talk about shaving our legs. It was sad for me, because my mother and my teachers never told me about such things. I would have preferred having an open relationship with my mother where beliefs and cultures did not play a role in educating me. I lacked knowledge about sexuality but my mind starting becoming inquisitive. I clearly remember, I used to steal my mother's shaving blades just to have my legs shaved, because the boys teased girls whose legs were unshaven. The difference with my friends and I, was that their mothers used to buy blades for them and teach them how to shave. Their background was different as compared to mine which was restricted and conformist.

I remember at the end of grade nine, we had to choose our subject combinations that we will be following from grade ten to grade twelve. During that era, we had higher grade subjects and lower grade subjects. All students who passed with an average of seventy per cent and above, were allowed to choose subjects on the higher grade and I was one of them. In high school, I enjoyed the subject, accounting and received the accounting award in grade eleven. The other subject that I enjoyed from standard eight (grade 10) till standard 10 (grade 12) was English. The reason being was that our English teacher, Mr Pillay enjoyed reading literature books to us. We used to act out the scenes from the plays we studied, in class.

In high school, an enjoyable time for me was sports day. Each year, we celebrated sports day with several activities such as soccer, netball, volleyball and athletics. I played volleyball and was selected to represent the school for the interschool sports tournaments. An interschool sports tournament is where the best players get selected to represent the school and compete against other schools. I was good at serving the ball to the opposition team and scored many points for my team. This is one of the highlights of my schooling career.

I also displayed leadership qualities and throughout my high school career, I was elected as the class monitor. Being the class monitor, gave me confidence and I was also proud that my teachers saw something in me, that I did not. I believe I developed leadership qualities from my father. My father is the head of the home and leads the family. I witnessed his leadership

at home and therefore I became a leader at school. Figure 3.7 is a photograph of my monitor badge.



Figure 3.7 My monitor badge at Esther Payne Smith Secondary School

During my high school years, by the grace of God, my family's financial situation improved and from standard eight onwards (grade ten), my dad bought me everything I needed. I became a spoiled child. I used to receive R10 per day for pie and coke. That used to be my daily lunch until I could not fit into my pair of jeans anymore. In the year 2000, our school hosted its very first debutants' ball. A debutants' ball is a dance hosted by the school to raise funds. The girl who raises the most money, is crowned the queen and the boy who raises the most money is crowned the king. The teachers, together with the principal, identifies ten girls in the grade eleven class to participate. Should any of the girls decline, then anyone from grade eleven who wishes to participate, can do so. I refused to participate, only because I did not want to dance with a boy. I felt uncomfortable around boys and then to suddenly be close to one and dance with him, made me uneasy. My mathematics teacher encouraged and persuaded me to participate. I eventually agreed. She then spoke to my father who at first was reluctant. I feel that he was reluctant because there was too much work involved in the process and but he did not want to disappoint me so he eventually agreed. With much hard work and effort, it paid off in the end. I won the debutants' ball that year and was crowned queen. The moment when the master of ceremonies announced my name as the winner, my heart started beating faster because I was very surprised. I did not expect to win the competition because there were so

many good contestants. I think I looked down upon myself. I felt I was not popular like other girls and did not have many friends. Figure 3.8 is the Debutant's Ball brochure.

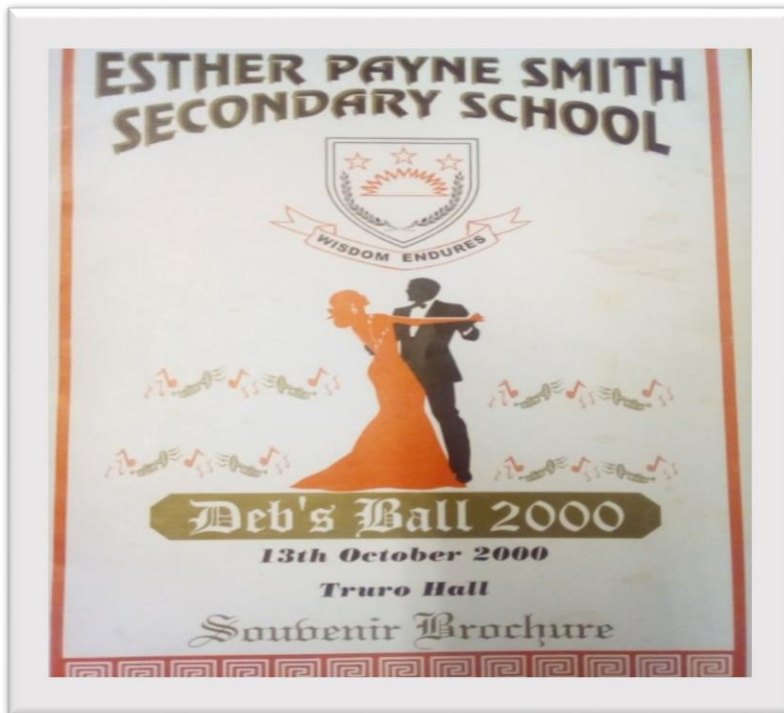


Figure 3.8 The Debutant's Ball brochure

Another high school memory, that I vividly recall, was when a company came to our school and donated boxes of sanitary towels. The Head of Department (HOD) was in charge of distributing these to the girls. She called us per class group and each girl received a pack. Honestly, we felt embarrassed carrying these sanitary towels in our hands and going back to class because the boys teased us. The HOD then told us to go back to the classroom and bring our school bags or wrap the sanitary towels in our school jerseys. I was one of them who went and fetched my bag. Later that day, the teacher decided to talk to the boys and requested all females to leave the room. After a while, the boys mentioned that the teacher stressed the point that the boys must treat the girls the same way they would treat their mothers and sisters.

In high school, it was sad to witness how many girls got pregnant and had to leave school to look after their babies. Whilst my group of friends were participating in negative behaviour, I was seen as the odd one in the group. I was mocked and teased because I did not want to join them. Being teased, made me feel bad about not wanting to blend in with them. I had a feeling

of not belonging but the voice of my mother helped me to remain strong and continue with my schooling.

### **Tertiary Education: The privilege of attending post-school education**

I consider myself fortunate that I got to attend university, taking into account the financial struggle my parents went through in educating me. Due to lack of career guidance given to me at school, I choose to study business management and was of the impression that I wanted to get into the commerce field. I completed my Business Management Diploma with five distinctions.

One of the reasons why I believed I performed well during these three years of studying for my diploma, was the positive relationships I built with my lecturers. I can remember that the lecturers for all my modules were so patient with the class. They also encouraged and motivated us to continue learning. I observed that every year, my relationship with my lecturers continued to improve. Eventually, in my third year, it felt as if my lecturers were my friends. I appreciated the fact that I was learning and at the same time felt very positive about the learning process. I believed that I performed well because of the relationships that were established in the learning environment.

It was because of my good academic performance, a secondary school employed me as an accounting teacher. I was only 21 years old at that time, and this was my first full time job. Being a 21- year old and teaching students close to my age was interesting. I felt that students related to me better than my older colleagues. Also, they were not afraid to approach me about sensitive issues that they wanted to speak about. Some of the issues the girls spoke about were their boyfriends. I believed the difference in age allowed students to feel comfortable with me. I saw this as an opportunity to also educate them in making the right choices in life. If students spoke to older teachers about boyfriends and girlfriends, these older teachers may have considered it disrespectful.

Moving on from teaching at the secondary school, I then got employed at a private college. At this college, my title was Quality Assurance Business Lecturer. The transition from teaching high school learners to college students was different but also challenging. In 2007, I applied for a lecturing post at a TVET College (previously known as a Further Education and Training

(FET) college). I was a successful candidate and started lecturing in the NCV programme at the college. In the TVET sector, to be regarded as a qualified professional, one must be registered with South African Council for Educators (SACE) and SACE requires all educators to have a teaching qualification. It is mandatory. Based on that, the University of KwaZulu-Natal offered a teaching qualification for all TVET lecturers who were considered unqualified. This programme was referred to as the National Professional Diploma in Education – Vocational Training (NPDE – VT).

I enrolled for this qualification and I completed the NPDE-VT in 2010. One module in the NPDE was the teaching practice module. In this module, our lecturer taught us how to use creative methods in lesson planning. One method she taught us, was the use of the collage. I found this very interesting and was sure that I would implement this in my teaching activities. I went on further to complete an Advance Certificate in Education (ACE) specialising in Life Orientation. I completed this qualification achieving a *Cum Laude pass*. I choose LO as a teaching specialisation to better equip myself with the necessary skills and knowledge needed to enact the prescribed curriculum. Since LO includes a variety of learning outcomes, I needed to be prepared in all aspects of the curriculum to be able to facilitate the achievement of the desired outcomes because I did not want my students to be in a similar predicaments as I had found myself with inadequate training and knowledge about sexuality education.

### **My learning from my personal history**

My personal history allowed me to reflect on my learning and examine myself as a teacher. Through my personal history self-study, I developed an awareness about the values I brought into my current teaching practice. Samaras (2011) explains that learning experiences can inform your teaching. Therefore, looking at my own educational experiences, gave me insight into my future activities of teaching and learning. From my exploration into my lived educational experiences, the following learning emerged: *Acknowledging cultural practices, establishing positive relationships with students, learning through games, learning through role play and learning using art in the lesson*. In order to represent my learning and have a better understanding of what I actually learned, I used two metaphorical images and a collage. My learning on “*Acknowledging cultural practices*” and “*Establishing positive relationships with students,*” were explained using metaphors. The remainder of the learning was explained using a collage. Figure 3.9 is a photograph of multi-coloured hairbands: a metaphorical image representing my first learning: *Acknowledging different cultural practices*

## Learning 1: Acknowledging different cultural practices



Figure 3.9 Multi-coloured hairbands: a metaphorical image representing my first learning: Acknowledging different cultural practices

My mother used to curl my hair and use multi-coloured hairbands to show off the beauty of my hair. These hairbands all grouped together represents the different cultures we see in our classrooms. The hairbands are all different shapes, sizes and colours, however, they serve the same purpose of tying ones hair. To me, this artefact symbolises that, regardless of the different cultures my students come from, they are all students, in my class for the same reason and that is to learn.

Looking back at my memory stories, I have become aware of the important role, culture and its practices play in teaching sexuality education. Moletsane (2011, p. 195) explains that culture “encompasses in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs... culture is learned, shared, and an integral part to an individual or

group's sense identity." By exploring my personal history, I learned that students come with different cultural influences that affect how they learn sexuality education. As shared earlier in this chapter, when I was growing up, certain words were not allowed to be spoken at my home because it was considered disrespectful. Therefore, it was uncomfortable for me to use such words when I was at school. In planning my lessons for this research, I had to bear that in mind. My memory stories aided me in identifying suitable activities that allowed my students to participate without feeling uncomfortable about the topic covered. Ndalen (2013) shows that the cultural practice of story-telling has played a vital role in informing his style of teaching by assisting him in selecting topics that are of genuine interest to learners. Madondo (2014) suggests that teachers, when planning lessons, have a responsibility to seriously consider learners' existing knowledge, learned through cultural practices. In navigating my personal history, I was awakened to the fact that students come from different backgrounds and belief systems. I considered these backgrounds when I taught the sexuality education content. Therefore, my style of teaching sexuality education was informed by my cultural practices. Cultural practices played a major role in the type of activities I selected which allowed students to be involved in the lesson and talk openly about different issues.

The role of culture has made a significant contribution to my pedagogical choices as I taught the sexuality education content. My memory stories guided me in selecting teaching strategies that integrated different views of culture where no learner was placed in an uncomfortable situation. Researching my personal history encouraged me to design the lessons and activities in a way that allowed students to feel comfortable in the process of learning. Through this self-study process, I became aware of the importance of culture as a phenomenon when teaching sexuality education. I learned that the way we think and act is influenced by our culture. So too, in the study conducted by Beyers (2010), she indicated that teachers are compelled to forget their own cultural notions regarding sexuality education but be mindful of students' culture and upbringing when teaching sexuality education subject matter. Hence, when planning my lessons, I included and acknowledged the different cultures of students and this informed my innovative teaching methods.

Figure 3.10 is a photograph of a light switch which metaphorically represents my second learning: *Establishing positive relationships with students.*

## Learning 2: Establishing positive relationships with students



Figure 3.10: A photograph of a light switch which is a metaphorical image representing my second learning: Establishing positive relationships with students

I took a photograph of this light switch in my bedroom. If I had to relate this light switch to my study, it represents establishing positive energy and relationships with my student. As the current runs through the wiring in the light switch when the power is switched on, it symbolises me working at switching students' attention on by working towards establishing positive relationships with my students, otherwise my students will never see the light of sexuality education. By waking up from the bed and reaching for the light switch is an indication that positive relationships can only be built over time. The switch symbolises the teacher that takes the first step in ensuring that positivity is built in lessons and students therefore see the light in sexuality education lessons after I switch on the light allowing the current to flow through.

I have learned that if there is no positive relationship between teachers and students in the lesson, then the learning process can be hindered. As shared in this chapter, during my primary school, when the topic on sexuality was taught and the entire class including myself laughed at

the teacher because we found the topic amusing, the teacher did not make any attempt to establish a positive relationship. The teacher merely left the light switch off by refusing to teach the lesson further on sexuality education. I have also become aware that if students are not happy, then the lesson will not be successful and the desired learning outcomes will not be achieved. I have come to understand that if the learning environment is positive, then only teaching and learning can be effective and efficient. My personal history has helped me realise that establishing positive relationships with students, can influence the success of the lesson.

As Masinga (2009) clarifies, various feelings are prompted during the teaching and learning process because teaching is not just a technical enterprise but is connected to personal experiences. Furthermore, Ndaleni (2013) elucidates that meaningful learning happens through the consideration of emotions by the teacher. Looking back, I can see that my teachers at school did not create a positive learning environment when sexuality education was taught. I now believe that if a positive relationship was established then, the class would have reacted differently. As explained by Rantala and Maatta (2012), for learning to take place with joy, the interaction between teacher and learner must be conducted in a relaxed atmosphere which also promotes the growth of learners. Through memory work, I have learnt that establishing positive relationships during lessons are healthy for both the teacher and students and this can improve students' academic performance. This has been proven by Klem and Connell (2004) who found that learners in compassionate relationships at school with teachers, feel more positive towards their academic work.

Revisiting my educational experiences. I have realised the emotional discomfort I felt in the classroom when sexuality content was taught to me, negatively influenced the way I was teaching sexually education to my students. Through my memory work, I have come to understand that when creating a positive classroom environment, there must be mutual respect and I must be supportive to my students as cautioned by Hussain et al (2013), who claimed that students, who have positive relationships with their teachers, excel academically compared to their peers who have negative relationships with their teachers. I have realised that as a teacher, I must constantly build positive relationships with my students for a successful learning environment and improved sexuality education teaching. I have also learned that my positive relationships with my students must be consistent and cannot change whenever my mood or emotions are down or when I am having a bad day. In addition, recalling past educational experiences, I have realised that if students display a negative attitude towards me as their

lecturer, I need to find means and avenues to address the issue and turn the situation from negative to positive. The method that I will use is communication, which I showed the benefit of in the discussion of my high school career. During the lessons, if I observe a negative response coming from students, then I will call the student and have a one on one chat with them. I believe communicating with the student, will lead to a better understanding between myself and the students thus creating a healthy and positive classroom environment.

According to Roffey (2012), positive relationships are central to the well-being of teachers and students. She further explained that positive relationships in schools underpin an effective learning environment. According to Sideliager and Butterfield (2010, as cited in Barr, 2016, p.2), “rapport is built and a positive climate is developed when teachers and students co-construct a learning environment that encourages active student participation.” I have learned that when teachers work towards building a supportive learning environment for students, it encourages the student to fully engage in the learning process. Therefore, I can say that an important component of teaching sexuality education was, when I was able to build strong positive relationships with students throughout my study as I observed my students as they were participating in the lesson.

Madondo (2011, p. 126) emphasises that “to develop a constructive learning environment, the teacher must reduce all acts that impact negatively on emotions such as administering corporal punishment or making degrading remarks to students.” Therefore as a teacher and also as part of my profession, it was my duty to ensure that learning takes place in a positive environment and healthy relationships are established and maintained throughout the learning process. Additionally, through my personal history I have learned that it is very crucial to build and maintain positive relationships with my students as this can assist them to improve academically and enhance cognitive learning. Figure 3.11 is the collage that represents my *Learning through games, Learning through role-play and Learning through the use of art in the lesson.*



Figure 3.11 Collage representing: Learning through games, learning through role play and learning through using art in the lesson

The different learning will now be illustrated using extracts from this composite collage. Figure 3.12 is an extract from the collage (Figure 3.11) representing: *Learning through games*

### Learning 3: Learning through games



Figure 3.12 A section of the collage (Figure 3.11) that represents: Learning through games

Through my personal history, I have learnt how effective, playful learning can be in teaching sexuality education. Previously, I never considered the use of games as an educational tool that can be used in the learning process. It was by journeying through my lived experiences, I learnt the value of implementing games when teaching sexuality education. When I looked back at my primary schooling, especially grade six and seven, I came to realise that games were not only developed for entertainment purposes. Games are used for fun and entertainment as well as a pedagogical approach. I have deduced that it is up to the teachers to make learning fun and meaningful. My memory work has showed me that by using games when teaching, teachers can expect more engagement in the lesson from learners.

Travelling through my personal history, I learnt that the use of games is a very important educational tool in the classroom. It was a learning tool that promoted learning for me and also improved my pedagogical approach in my teaching practice. Haruna H, Hu, and Kai Wah Chu (2018) explains that using games in the classroom, can be a motivating method of educating learners rather than using traditional teaching methods. They further explain that sexuality education knowledge acquisition through games can influence and enhance cognitive

development, raise awareness and also encourage behavioural change. I viewed games as a perfect opportunity that allowed for student participation and engagement. From my personal experiences, games helped me to understand that students enjoyed what they were doing and therefore learning the prescribed content in a fun way, took place. Through my educational experience, I learnt that playful learning is an effective educational tool in the delivery of sexuality education content.

I had found theory lessons boring and I always complained that I could not remember the notes. Subjects that included a great deal of theory which I had to remember for examination, were not interestingly taught to me. The only method that assisted me in remembering my study material was when my friends and I created games and made learning fun. One of the games we developed was a quiz. Significantly, what was learned during games with friends was not forgotten. Therefore, from that experience I choose to teach sexuality content differently than the way it was taught by my teachers.

I found that if a lesson is dull and boring with no excitement, it become difficult to recall learning material from that lesson. Therefore, I have come to understand that gamification addressed the issue of boring lessons. My personal experiences guided me in planning lessons that were fruitful and this improved my pedagogical practice as agreed to by Magubane (2015, p. 136) that, “it was through fun that we were enthusiastically involved in the learning.” Likewise, Coholic, Eys and Lougheed (2012, p. 833) confirmed that in their arts-based programme, “through the experience of fun, some of the children developed self-awareness, self-esteem and felt happier and more confident.” In recalling my lived experiences, I have realised that students want to learn, but it is how we as teachers teach the subject content which helps them to learn and remember the content. Figure 3.13 is a section of a collage that representing: *Learning through role-play*.

#### 4. Learning through role-play



Figure 3.13 A section of the collage (Figure 3.11) representing: Learning through role play

In looking back through my memory stories, the theme of role-play emerged. My English teacher used role-play when he taught us the section on advertisements and this had a significant impact in guiding me as I compiled my activities for my lessons. My English teacher used to divide the learners in groups of five and instruct us to select an advertisement from television and act out the scene. In acting out the scene, the AIDA (attention, interest, desire and action) principle used as an advertising strategy must be adhered to. In recollecting these past episodes of my secondary schooling, I realised that the sexuality education content can also be taught through role-play. From retracing my memories, it was evident that role-play was used in all learning areas including sexuality education. I have become aware that role-play can be integrated in all subjects of the college curriculum.

My memory stories have taught me that smiling and laughing through role-play, improved the learning processes. I have learnt that when lessons are taught in a different way, students' attention is immediately captured. Through my memory-work I have also realised that by making a small change in the manner in which the curriculum is taught, can have a bigger effect on students' participation. I learnt that laughing is good for the soul and I also believe that laughing is good for the learning process as it kept students awake and interested in the lesson.

According to Taylor, Dlamini , Khanyile and Mpanza (2012, p. 442), role play is defined as “pretending to be someone else as a way of learning new skills or understanding.” I believe that role-play as a teaching technique creates a holistic teaching atmosphere that enhances the learning process. At times, traditional teaching methods do not always convey and provide students with all the knowledge required in solving real life problems. Since sexuality education is a current topic that students are faced with in their everyday lives, I incorporated role-play in my lessons and this encouraged student participation and engagement with the lesson. It was because of what I learnt from my educational experiences, that I was able to encourage learners to participate in a role-play lesson.

Jarus, Odell & Troiano (2002) points out that there are three advantages for students and teachers using role-play as a teaching strategy. Firstly, they mentioned that students’ interest in the topic is raised. Secondly, students become increasingly involved in a role-play lesson. Thirdly, role-play used as a teaching strategy teaches empathy and understanding. I support these advantages since I personally experienced this at secondary school when the lesson was taught through role-play. I immediately developed an interest in the lesson. Through re-examining my educational experiences, I realised that a comfortable platform was necessary for active learning.

In a society where HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy and STI’s are on the rise, it was my responsibility as the teacher to provide my students with the necessary information to build on their knowledge. For me, it was important on how I got the message across to my students. Hence, my lived experience has guided me in improving how I taught the sexuality curriculum by using role-play to get the message on sexuality education to students. Taylor, et al (2012) reported that they conducted five classroom lessons where role-play was used as a creative teaching and learning method to promote safe sexual behaviour. Also, my memory work has revealed that role-play encouraged my high school friends and I, to make responsible decisions about our sexuality and to protect us from unwanted teenage pregnancy and debilitating sexual transmitted infections.

Through memory work, I have realised how students understand subject matter was essential in planning my lessons. My educational experiences have taught me that teaching strategies must be designed in a manner that captures students’ attention and maintains their concentration levels throughout the lesson. Some of my teachers in primary school failed in keeping the lesson active for the full duration. Therefore, I planned to not follow in the footsteps

of my teachers but rather do things differently. As I revisited my educational experiences, I realised that a positive response from students contributes to a positive classroom environment, hence students learn better. Figure 3.14 is a section of the collage representing: *Learning through the use of art in the lesson.*

### **Learning 5: Learning through the use of art in the lesson**



Figure 3.14: A section of the collage (Figure 3.11) that represents: Learning through the use of art in the lesson

In re-visiting my lived experiences, I realised that collage making was a good learning activity to teach sexuality education. According to Simmons and Daley (2013, p. 1), “art can serve as a catalyst for engaging the imagination and exploring novel possibilities as part of the creative process.” In retracing my memories, I have learnt that using a collage effectively to teach sexuality education, students were able to be creatively express themselves. When I look back at my schooling career, my lessons on sexuality education lacked that creativity and innovation. Therefore, we were not able to concentrate and felt the sexuality education topic uncomfortable and boring. The class made a lot of noise rather than listen to the teacher. It was only during tertiary education phase, that I realised how effective the collage can be in the teaching and learning process. My teaching practice lecturer, taught us how to use the collage as an educational tool and how to incorporate the collage in our lesson plans. My memory work had

guided me in planning my lessons whereby special attention was given to the respective learning outcomes and how they were linked to certain activities.

In re-examining my educational experiences, I realised that the collage making activity was a process of thoughts before action. This process allowed us to think first and then proceed with the action. The action involved the cutting and pasting activity whereby students became fully engaged themselves in learning. Raht, Smith and Macentec (2009, p. 229) describes a collage as a “creative art-based method in which separate images are cut from magazines, newspapers and books and then glued together to create a new image.” Through my personal history self-study, I became aware that collage making was a very interesting method which allowed students to express their thoughts through images. Learning and remembering subject content through images was a new method learned through the process of re-visiting my educational experiences. It contributed and informed the planning of my teaching activities.

According to Masinga (2013), the collage making is a process whereby learners engage themselves in deep thinking and express themselves using visual images. This means that thinking has to take place first before relevant images are selected. I believe that it was a process of thoughts being created and then portrayed as images. These images resembled their perceptions of how they interpreted a specific concept. According to Aristotle (2009, as cited in Simmons & Daley, 2013, p. 1) “the soul never thinks without an image”. He further explains that image making and our perceptions of it, allows us to make sense of the world.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I recalled my lived experiences of learning and being taught sexuality education. I discussed how I experienced the process of sexuality education at different stages in my life. These recollections have assisted me in understanding the role that parents, teachers, friends and culture play in the process of sexuality education. As an individual develops in the different phases in life, different individuals play a significant role in educating the child about sexuality. This chapter has given me insight into my learning from my personal history, which has dramatically transformed the way I plan and present my lessons on sexuality education.

Reliving past episodes of my life, has brought about meaning, change, innovation and creativity in my current teaching practice. The key message for me in this chapter is, that I learned from the past and it is the past that will positively influence my future when teaching sexuality education.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **IT'S TIME FOR CHANGE**

#### **Introduction**

The main purpose of my self-study research was to improve my sexuality education teaching practice. In chapter three, I recalled past events and memories related to sexuality education that triggered in my mind. Importantly, I gave an account of my learning from my memory stories and how my learning has influenced and contributed to my teaching practice. As this is a self-study, events from the past play a role in who I am as a practising sexuality education lecturer. In the previous chapter, I described events from my past that influenced my current classroom environment. I believe that recalling those episodes, made me realise that I should not make the same mistakes that my teachers and parents made regarding sexuality education but rather aim for improving my communication of sexuality education information. I envisaged that this can be done by re-examining past educational encounters regarding the teaching of sexuality education and identify areas that can be taught differently.

In this chapter, I discuss the structure of my lessons and how my themes and pedagogical learning emerged through the process of data analysis. I then explain how the concept map has helped me to further identify the themes and pedagogical learning of all my lessons that were taught over a period of five weeks. I narrate how the concept map had assisted me to visualise my data into two themes and four pedagogical learnings that emerged through the process of data analysis. This chapter also includes examples of students' classwork together with pictures that are related to the themes that emerged.

#### **Exploring innovative ways of improving sexuality education**

Since this work was a self-study where I looked at my practice with the aim of improving it, I found that ultimately, it was my teaching of sexuality education that was being explored. My second research question is:

*How do students experience and respond to my teaching of the sexuality component of the Life Orientation curriculum*

In responding to this question, I taught the sexuality education content to my students in accordance with learning outcomes of the LO curriculum as prescribed by the DHET (2013) Assessment Guidelines Document. For LO, the learning outcomes for the topic, health and wellness include:

*Describe the biological and physiological differences between males and females  
Compare and describe gender roles, responsibilities and behaviour within  
relationships*

*Identify situations which are likely to lead to risky sexual encounters and behaviour  
(Range: unwanted pregnancy, date rape, STI/HIV)*

DHET (2013, p. 2)

My lessons for sexuality education were taught over a period of five weeks. There were three lesson plans prepared for this study and eight lessons taught. Each lesson plan covering a specific number of interaction periods that represented additional lessons.

I designed three lesson plans that were further broken down into different parts for each lesson. Each lesson plan included one learning outcome as follows:

Lesson Plan One: Describe the biological and physiological differences between males and females. From lesson one, two lesson interactions were done.

Lesson Plan Two: Compare and describe gender roles, responsibilities and behaviour within Relationships. Again from this lesson, another two lesson interactions were done.

Lesson Plan Three: Identify situations which are likely to lead to risky sexual encounters and behaviour. (Range: unwanted pregnancy, date rape, STI/HIV. The final lesson resulted in four lesson interactions taught. In total as indicated above eight lessons were taught out of the three umbrella lesson plans prepared.

During the planning phase, I engaged my critical friends in on-going discussions, where I shared my thinking and aims for each lesson. Engaging with my critical friends helped me to think of new ideas for my lesson plans. My critical friends were experienced lecturers as mentioned in chapter two and I trusted their judgement and used their comments as guidelines when constructing my lesson plans. As indicated by Samaras (2011, p. 7) “critical friends offer critique and provide support as they question and provoke one to think more about what it is that you are planning to do.” This rang true for me when one of my critical friends made a comment because I was in a quandary regarding the duration of the lessons as I wanted to give students enough information to ensure that they achieved the required learning outcome but at the same time I did not to burden my students with information overload. My critical friend commented, “*Maybe, you should add another activity for the first learning outcome.*” This comment assisted me greatly and I felt reassured that my critical friend agreed with my decision. My critical friends also gave me valuable suggestions about the different types of learning activities that I could use to make my teaching of sexuality education more interesting.

I was extremely grateful for their invaluable support and engagement with me because as so eloquently suggested by (Samaras, 2011, p. 75), “I was able to think deep beneath the surface of my teaching.” When planning my lessons, I had to work according to my timetable. At the beginning of the academic year, each lecturer is given a timetable which indicates their class groups, levels of the groups and timeframes for their lessons. My timetable for LO was scheduled for two lessons per week, each lesson of one hour duration. Unfortunately, I found it difficult to accommodate my subject content delivery within this schedule because I wanted to give students as much information as possible. My critical friends assisted me greatly in streamlining my lessons so that it became manageable for students and neither my students nor I, was placed under pressure.

In Table 4.1 below, I illustrate how I planned these lessons according to the learning outcomes per week, the learning activities linked to each learning outcome and the different parts into which the lessons were divided. The point of dividing the lessons into different parts was because of the limited duration of one hour per lesson, which would have been insufficient for students to complete the learning activities prescribed for that lesson outcome. **In chapter this chapter, chapter four, there were four lessons being taught.**

Table 4.1 Outline of the teaching process engaged in for this study

Week	Lesson	Part	Topic	Learning Outcomes	Activities
1	1	1	Health and wellbeing	Describe the biological and physiological differences between males and females	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different views what sexuality is from discussions</li> <li>• Labelling the diagram of male and female followed by discussions.</li> </ul>
1	1	2	Health and wellbeing	Describe the biological and physiological differences between male and females	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students watched a you-tube video</li> <li>• Compiling a chart with a picture of what you want to be like and what you do not want to be like.</li> <li>• Presentations followed.</li> </ul>
2	2	1	Health and wellbeing	Compare and describe gender roles, responsibilities and behaviour within relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student requested to draw up a list of occupations for men and women.</li> <li>• Discussions took place after completed activity.</li> </ul>
2	2	2	Health and wellbeing	Compare and describe gender roles, responsibilities and behaviour within relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify what they think is love in relationships. Card activity.</li> </ul>
3	3	1	Health and wellbeing	Identify situations which are likely to lead to risky sexual encounters and behaviour. (Range: unwanted pregnancy, date rape, STI/HIV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Game – myths and facts about HIV</li> </ul>
4	3	2	Health and wellbeing	Identify situations which are likely to lead to risky sexual encounters and behaviour. (Range: unwanted pregnancy, date rape, STI/HIV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roleplay</li> </ul>
4	3	3	Health and wellbeing	Identify situations which are likely to lead to risky sexual encounters and behaviour. (Range: unwanted pregnancy, date rape, STI/HIV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case study on teenage pregnancy</li> <li>• Discussions</li> </ul>
5	3	4	Health and wellbeing	Identify situations which are likely to lead to risky sexual encounters and behaviour. (Range: unwanted pregnancy, date rape, STI/HIV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collage making</li> <li>• Followed by presentations and discussions.</li> </ul>

## **Unravelling the themes**

On completion of the teaching and learning, the next phase was to sort, present and analyse the data to make meaning of the data collected. I used a thematic analytical approach to analyse the data. According to Braun and Clark (2006, p. 79), a “thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data.” I viewed thematic analysis as being most appropriate for my study as it helped and guided me in organising the data so it was easy for me to make meaning of the data. Additionally, thematic analysis provided me with a step-by-step approach which was useful when sorting and analysing the data. According to Braun and Clark (2006, p. 79), the step-by step approach includes six phases:

- 1) Getting familiar with the data
- 2) Generating initial codes
- 3) Searching for themes
- 4) Reviewing themes
- 5) Defining and naming themes and
- 6) Producing the report.

For the purposes of my study, I renamed phase six as:

- 6) Writing of identified themes and pedagogical learning.

### **Getting familiar with the data**

As suggested by Braun and Clark (2006), I needed to immerse myself in the data in order to become familiar with the data as per phase one of the analytical process. So, I engaged in the process of reading and re-reading the data as I searched for patterns and meanings (Braun and Clark, 2006).

As part of getting familiar with the data, I gathered all evidence of teaching and learning that took place during the lessons. I then scattered this evidence across a table in my home as indicated by Figure 4.1 below.



Figure 4.1: Data scattered across the table

This was the point where I read and actively re-read my data to make meaning and find patterns. Since this phase was the fundamental phase in my analysis, it was very important that I did not skim through some data but ensured that all the data was read. As I was reading the data, I was taking notes to give me a better idea on how I would code the data.

### **Generating initial codes**

Through observing and taking notes, I tried to pinpoint what was interesting about my data (Braun and Clark, 2006). It was during this process where codes from the data was extracted. As I looked at the data on the table, I began to organise it into meaningful groups. I systematically paid attention to each item and identified interesting components that formed a pattern. Braun and Clark (2006) suggested the use of highlighters or coloured pens for coding to indicate potential patterns. I was guided by their advice and made use of different coloured sticky paper for coding purposes. I tried to code as many possible patterns because I did not know what might be interesting to me later.

After I read the data several times and had compiled my list of ideas of what I found interesting in the data, I started generating codes. Samaras (2011) explains that one can make sense of data through the process of coding. I was also inspired by Samaras (2011), when she suggested that “your research question may draw you toward focusing on a particular type of code” (p. 203). So, I tried to keep my research question, “*How do*

*students experience and respond to my teaching of the sexuality component of the Life Orientation curriculum*” constantly in my mind as I was trying to code the data.

Through the process of coding, I paid particular attention to behaviours, repeated statements and similarities across my data. As I observed my data, I saw patterns forming. I found these patterns interesting and I organised the data into meaningful groups. I used sticky notes (see figure 4.1) with different colours to guide me in identifying the common patterns that were identified in the process. I placed one colour of sticky note at a time on the data that resembled a pattern.

### **Searching for themes**

Once I completed the process of the sticky notes, I began the next phase as suggested by Braun and Clark (2006), in which they mentioned as evidence, a long list be identified with different codes across the data. I sorted the different codes into themes by placing all the different codes together to form an overarching theme. Braun and Clark (2006) suggested that a visual representation such as mind maps or tables can be a very helpful tool during this phase, Therefore, I created a concept map presented below in Figure 4.2, to help me display my themes. According to Butler-Kisber and Poldma (2010), a concept map is a visual organiser used in teaching, research and practice in diverse settings and can provide a tool for meaning-making. Likewise, Daly (2004, p. 1) explains that “the concept map allows the researcher to see participants’ meaning, as well as, the connections that participants discuss across concepts or bodies of knowledge.” For my purposes, I used the concept map as a strategy to organise and document identified themes from my coded data.

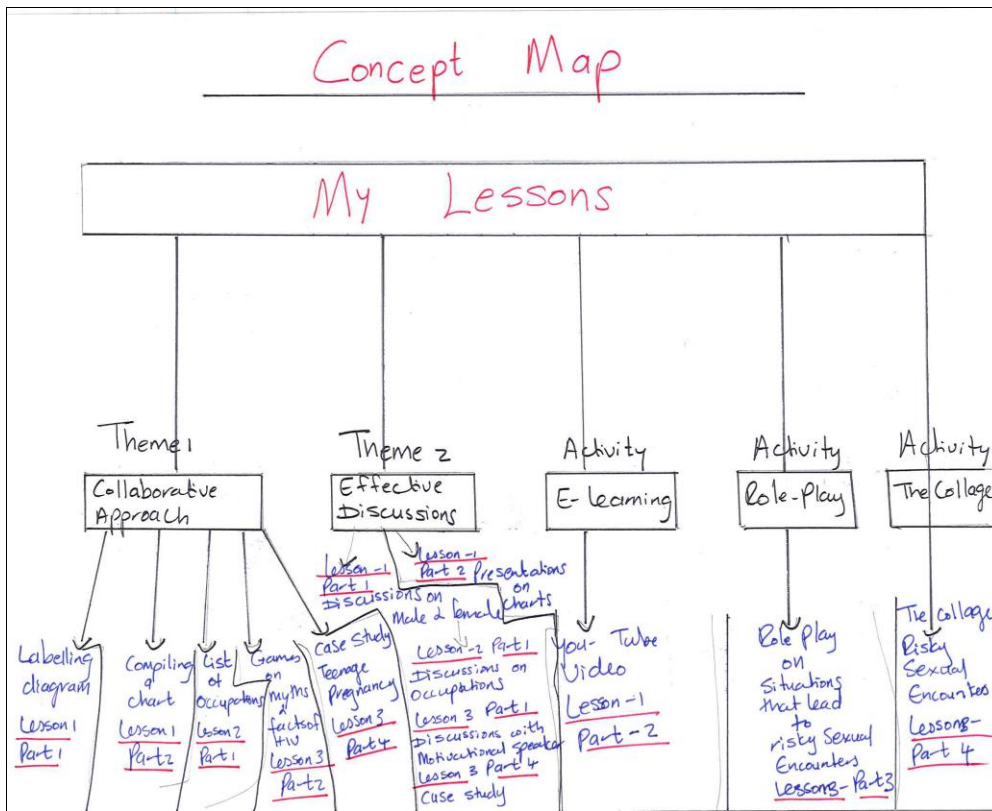


Figure 4.2 The concept map showing my initial understanding of the coded data

This is where I started thinking about the relationship between codes and themes. Braun and Clark (2006) guided me in the process as I selected the initial codes which led to the main themes. Whilst I was engaging in the process, I observed that some codes may form sub-themes whilst some codes may not belong anywhere. Consequently, it was acceptable for me to create a theme called “miscellaneous” (Braun and Clark, 2006, p. 90) temporarily, which was not included in my concept map. At the end of this phase, I began to have a sense of the significance of individual themes. However, at this point, I did not ignore the data because there was still uncertainty of whether the themes were applicable as they were or whether they needed to be refined.

Whilst themes were emerging through the codes, there were some codes that did not belong in the overarching theme. At this point, I did not abandon any of it as advised by Braun and Clark (2006). I referred to it as activities for now, since I believed it was interesting activities that were identified through the coding process. Through the phase of searching for themes, two themes were formed and three activities. The themes included collaborative learning and effective discussions. The activities were technology, role-play and collage making. At the end of this phase, the identified themes and activities were still uncertain because it had to pass through the next phase where I reviewed the themes.

## Reviewing themes

In reviewing the themes, I had to look for evidence that indicated whether the themes were themes and whether there was sufficient data to support the themes. Sometimes, themes may have to be broken down into separate themes or two themes may have to be combined to form one theme. From this point, I began reviewing and refining the themes. When reviewing the themes, I read all the collated extracts for each theme and decided whether or not there was a coherent pattern. When I observed that there was a coherent pattern, I was then satisfied and moved on to the second level of refining the themes. Importantly, I checked the validity of the individual themes as suggested by Braun and Clark (2006). When all themes were now refined, and I was satisfied, I constructed the thematic map (Figure 4.3), which was the visual representation showing my final themes. Whilst working on my visual representation, I was thinking about defining and naming my themes.

**Table 4.2** Final Concept Map (Thematic map)

<b>Theme 1 Collaborative Learning</b>	<b>Theme 2 Effective discussions</b>	<b>Interesting Pedagogical learning 1</b>	<b>Interesting Pedagogical learning 2</b>	<b>Interesting Pedagogical learning 2</b>
		<b>Educational videos</b>	<b>Role-play</b>	<b>Collage-making</b>
Male and female images	Male and female images	Using educational videos in sexuality education lessons	Using role-play in teaching sexuality education	The use of the collage in teaching sexuality education
What I would like to look like	What I would not like to look like	You tube video	Role play on situations that lead to risky sexual encounters	Risky sexual encounters
List of occupations	List of occupations			
Games on facts and myths	Discussion with motivational speaker			
Case study on teenage pregnancy	Case study on teenage pregnancy			

Table 4.2 Final concept map showing final themes and interesting pedagogical learnings

## Defining and naming themes

The process of defining and naming my themes began after I was satisfied with my visual representation of my data. Importantly, I was guided by Braun and Clark (2006) in keeping my themes simple and not too

complex. At the end of the phase, I could clearly define what the themes were and what they were not. I also kept each theme as concise as possible which is suggested by Braun and Clark (2006).

At this point, I knew exactly what the themes and pedagogical learning was and I was able to “describe the scope and content of each theme in a couple of sentences,” Braun and Clark (2006, p. 92). The names of the final themes were: collaborative learning and effective discussions. The pedagogical learning was;

- 1) Using educational videos in teaching sexuality education
- 2) Using role-play in teaching sexuality education
- 3) Exploring risky sexual encounters through the collage.

I believed that these names are concise and easily understandable and the reader will know immediately what each theme is about. During this phase, I also started to unpack these themes for the writing process.

### **Writing of identified themes and pedagogical learning**

As I began the writing process, I had to bear in mind that the writing tells the story of my data “in a way that convinces the reader of the merit and validity of the analysis,” (Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 93). Importantly, the write-up must provide an interesting account of the story across all themes (Braun and Clark, 2006).

At this point, my themes and my pedagogical learning was properly outlined and I reached a point of satisfaction where I was ready to start my writing about my identified themes and pedagogical learning. Below, I give an account of my story starting with the first theme on collaborative learning. The learning activities allocated to the first theme were:

- Labelling the diagram on the male and the female body
- Providing information on what I would like to look like and what would not like to look like
- Identifying a list of occupations for males and females
- A game on facts and myths on HIV
- A case study on teenage pregnancy.

### **Theme 1: Collaborative Learning**

Collaborative learning is the first theme that emerged. Laal and Laal (2011, p. 491) define collaborative learning as “an educational approach to teaching and learning that involves groups of learners working together to solve a problem, complete a task, or create a product.” Teaching LO to students from the sixteen to fifty four year, age group, I found that I encountered problems relating to the sexuality education content. I realised that I needed a teaching strategy that could assist me to capitalise on the age differences, as students

worked together. Hence, collaborative learning was what worked well in my sexuality education lessons as students worked together to complete activities. I got an opportunity to step back and allow them to learn from each other, as they brought different levels of wisdom into the activities. I created small working groups that comprised mixed genders and age levels to complete the task.

My initial thinking when planning the lessons was to promote shared learning amongst the students. In having them work collaboratively, I wanted to allow them to come together, share different opinions and listen to each other as they discuss sexuality education issues. Also, I wished to allow students of different age groups to share their thoughts about sexuality and how they see themselves as sexual beings. I sought to create learning spaces with different voices and different perspectives of the different age groups. I worked with the hope and assumption that students who are in their twenties will not think the same way about sexuality as compared to students who are in their forties. So, by allowing students to work collaboratively, this may result in different viewpoints allowing for interesting conversations to take place. This will also permit discussions that I might have had difficulties with, hence as I took a step back.

Through collaborative learning, I found a way of involving students in discussions that promoted open conversations and support for each other. Through observation, I could see that my assumptions were validated, as students challenged each other socially and emotionally while listening to different opinions and ideas (Laal and Laal, 2001).

In my process of understanding my data, the strength of collaborative learning was recognised in three of the lessons taught. In part one of the first lesson, which was in response to the first learning outcome of “*Describing the biological and physiological differences between male and female,*” all the necessary resources that were needed to facilitate learning, were made available for students. During the preparation stage, I shared these resources such as the diagram with my critical friends. I also reflected on the preparation for and the experience of the actual lesson.

*Today, searching through different resources to find a suitable picture that will relate to the learning outcome was not as easy as I expected it to be. There is a variety of relevant information that can be used in sexuality lessons. How do I know I had made the right choice? I guess, my critical friends’ role in the study has aided me in my selection after they viewed my resources.*  
(Personal Reflection 6 October 2018)

My intentions of sharing the diagram with my critical friends, was to get feedback on the suitability of the diagram. For a moment, I thought that the diagram might be too explicit for students to work with because it was an image of the naked body of male and the female persons. They agreed that the diagram is appropriate for the learning outcome to be taught, as one of the critical friends expressed, *“It is a good diagram to use for this particular lesson, the diagram clearly shows the learning outcome to be taught and students will be able to visually recognise the differences in the diagram.”* Hence, I was able to work with confidence that the diagram will be well received by the students. This reflection has taught me that it is always better to seek advice at times from colleagues who teach the same subject, when you find yourself doubtful about certain lesson content.

Before commencing the lesson, I asked the students to assist me in arranging the class furniture to facilitate the five groups that were formed. I then took out the group numbers from a bag which I had prepared two days before the lesson, My initial thought was to allow students to form their own groups because I wanted them to feel comfortable with each other. I then felt that if they selected their own groups, then the groups would comprise of their friends. This was supported by Cooper (1990), who highlighted that students who put themselves into groups spend more time socialising rather than working on the assigned tasks. I needed to then, make sure, this possibility was limited.

I requested each student to pick a number randomly from my bag. All the numbers were folded so students could not see which number they picked. Whilst they were selecting, I went around and placed a number on the table in the centre of each group as well as the diagram of the male and female body. I then asked students to check the number they selected from the bag and go to that table number. I also observed that each group comprised of male and female students from different age groups which I believe provided a good balance. The next thing was to request each group to elect a group leader. Once the group leader was elected, we then continued with the lesson.

I introduced the topic to the students as well as the learning outcomes. I asked them to observe the diagram of a male and that of a female human body that had been placed on the centre table of each group. The students were instructed to discuss the human body parts and provide names for each part and then label the diagram as a group (Figure 4.3)

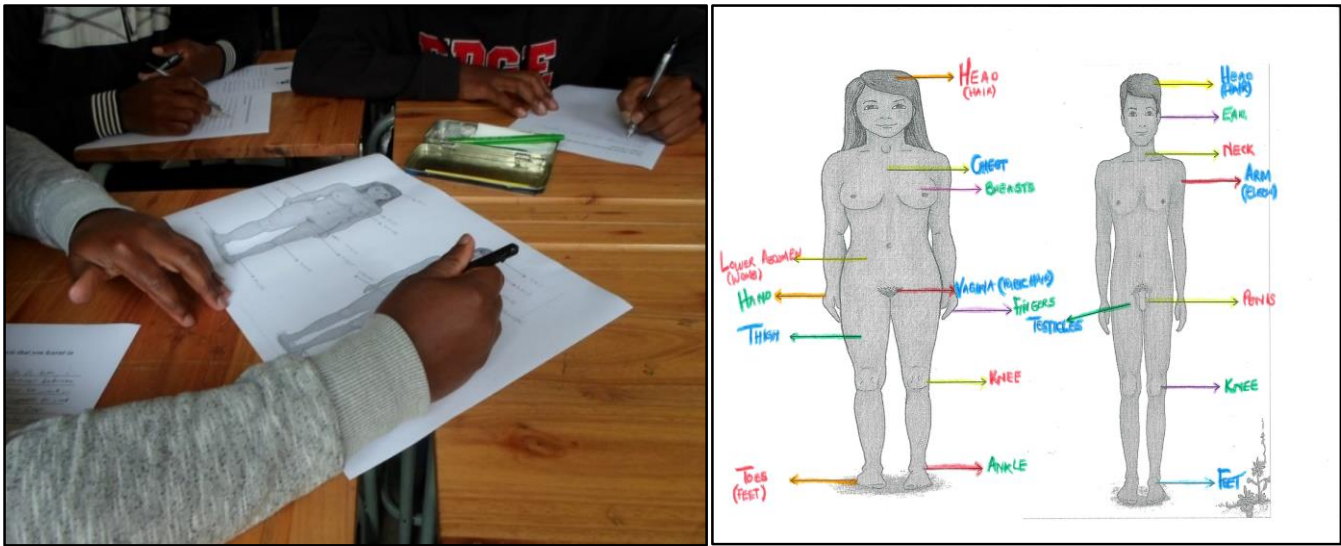


Figure 4.3: Students doing the activity on labelling the diagram of male and female

In providing them with these images, I was aware that there might be some discomfort for some of the students. The discomfort might have come from seeing an image of the naked human body. Another challenge that could have arisen, was the younger students discussing the body parts with the older students. Therefore, I informed them that, if discussing any body parts made them feel uncomfortable, they could discuss this as a group and rename the body parts using terms that were comfortable for them. I drew this understanding from remembering my own learning from my personal history (chapter three), where cultural practices must be acknowledged in the teaching and learning environment as to allow students to participate in the lessons without feeling uncomfortable.

In some groups, they were planning on changing the name of the body parts that were sensitive to talk about in the group. I thought that they might have felt this way because they were possibly feeling shy to speak about the body parts that made them feel uncomfortable. I later discovered that names were not changed which I believe was indicative that they began feeling relaxed in the learning process. As they were working, I felt that it was important that I move around the groups and listen to their interaction. Whilst moving from group to group, I observed that students were engaging with each other. They were talking, smiling, laughing and making comments about the images. Some comments from groups were “sexy women” and “this guy has no muscles.” All these comments were received well by other students, and yielded laughter, which from that moment, I also realised that active learning was taking place collaboratively. This informed me that they were comfortable with the task and working together. Students were contributing and sharing their thoughts and ideas on sexuality. I overheard students mention that they are attracted to thinner women and not fat women. This showed me that speaking about sexuality matters through collaborative learning created an open platform

for learning to take place. There was a relaxed atmosphere that was created as they intimately engaged in groups. Again, because they were talking to each other, it took away the discomfort that might have emerged from having to talk to me. In this way, they were able to talk to each other, which presented opportunities for them to learn from one another.

Once students completed the activity, we held a class discussion on the physiological differences between the male and the female body. The full content of the discussions is shared in my next theme, which is effective discussions. Since students now had an understanding of the physiological differences between males and females, we were able to move on to the next activity of listing the different occupations for males and females. In being able to list or compare different occupations between genders, it was imperative that the physiological differences between males and females be understood. The physiological differences now formed the link and connected to the different gender roles.

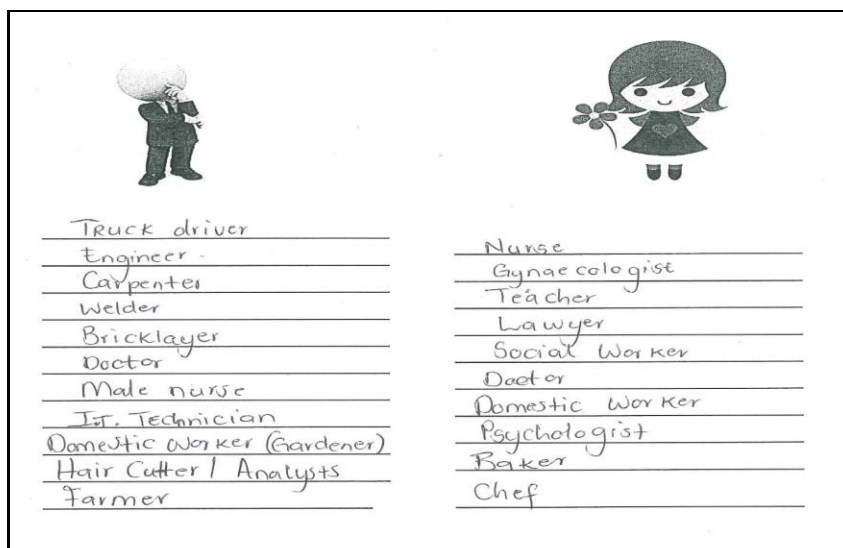
In preparation for the listing of the different occupations, I printed worksheets for students to complete this activity in class (Figure 4.5) I used the same method of grouping students together using numbers like the previous lesson. I reminded students that in the previous lesson, they learned about the biological and physiological differences between males and females. I believe it was important to remind students about the previous lesson because it is important to refresh the students' memory when there is a continuation of a prescribed topic. Students were asked to list the different occupations that were typically for males and those for females. The worksheet was placed on the desk, of a male and female character for them to work with. My intention for this activity was to observe how students view gender roles as part of understanding sexuality and to get them talking and moving away from being shy to participate in such lessons.

In allowing students to work collaboratively, I noted that participation in the discussions increased. The students raised strong points in their groups as they indicated what informed their responses. One of the points that I overheard as I walked around, was that that they were taught at home that men are providers and the women's role is to take care of the family. This brought about a strong debate around the table as they deliberated amongst each other. I got to see how collaborative learning allowed students to invest in the discussion supported by their viewpoints.

Part of the discussion included which occupation was suitable for males and not females. I realised that it was the females in the group who were stating why the men should not be doing female work. Reasons mentioned included that a female does not have the strength of a man to carry bricks or be in a construction field while men should not be administrative clerks because it is a very soft job and men must go out and do hard physical

labour. As I was doing my observation walk, I overheard, one student saying, “*Women must not be engineers because it is a job for a man.*” A female student then responded, “*Women are studying and improving their skills and qualifications in all specialised fields.*”

All the group members argued the point before making a final decision. Example of the point argued in the group by one student who mentioned that when students register for a particular qualification, it is not approved based on gender. So, females have the opportunity to select a career of their choice. All students in the group were contributing to the discussion. Figure 4.4 is the worksheet that was given to students to identify the occupations that were typically for males and females.



4.4 Group ideas on different occupations for males and females

After much interaction, students finally compiled a list of occupations for men and women. Thereafter, each group presented their work to the whole class. I asked each group leader to come to the front of the class and present the final list of occupations that the group compiled. What was presented by the group, will be shared in my next theme called effective discussions.

In the next lesson, the learning outcome was, “*Identify situations which are likely to lead to risky sexual encounters and behaviour (Range: unwanted pregnancy, date rape and STI/HIV).*” This was a sensitive topic and there was a possibility that students might have experienced these issues in their lives. So how I taught this topic was very important, as I did not want to upset any students in the process of teaching about sexuality.

In preparation for the lesson, I had four bells and five college t-shirts which were sponsored by the college Marketing Department. The purpose of requesting t-shirts for the lesson was to encourage and motivate

students to participate in the game and to reward the winning group for their good work. I believe it was important to reward good work as it keeps students motivated.

I informed students that in this lesson, they were going to play a game of facts and myths about HIV/AIDS. By introducing a game in the lesson, I thought it will create a relaxed atmosphere while learning about sexuality education at the same time. This drew me back to my personal history where sexuality education content was taught through games which allowed students to feel free to participate in a fun filled way. I envisaged that a game will help me address sexuality matters in the class environment. For this lesson, I intended to make learning interesting and add a little element of fun since it was a sensitive topic for all of us. I believed that to improve my teaching practice of sexuality education, I had to think outside the box and be creative in my lessons. Upon explaining what was to take place, students responded well with a “yeah,” which was an indication of interest to me.

Students then formed groups using the previous method and rearranged the classroom furniture as suggested. The rules and instructions of the game were explained as follows:

*I will read out a question, you will have to indicate whether that is a myth or a fact. If it is a myth, then the group must also explain why the question is regarded as a myth. You must discuss the answer then when you want to answer, you must ring the bell and then answer. Only if the explanation is correct, then the group will receive one point. If the explanation is incorrect, then the group will receive minus one point and the next group who answers correctly will be awarded the point. In the end, I will total the scores and the winning team will receive t-shirts that were sponsored by our college Marketing Department. In your team, you must now decide on a name. The names given will be written on the board where I am going to keep the scores.*

I believe this game would be significant in getting the sexuality message across to learners in a playful atmosphere. Whilst the content was sensitive, I believe that using games allowed them to learn prescribed sexuality education content. The questions that was prepared was in line with their prescribed material. So, the games it made it easier for me to teach the sexuality education content.

The names given to the teams were Power Rangers, Cheetahs, The Incredibles, Springboks, and Team Fire. As we began the game, I could see how their interest was captured by the game as each group attentively listened as I read out each question. Some examples of questions included:

- STI's stands for "safe times in sex"
- If you tested HIV positive, you will die immediately
- Only women can contract an STI
- Girls have to have sex every night to get pregnant
- What does AIDS stand for?

They discussed the answers first and when they were sure, they rang the bell and then answered. In their discussion, they were talking very softly because they did not want the other groups to hear what the correct answers were. As the students worked towards winning, I kept a record on the whiteboard of the correct answers for all the groups. After each question, students also gave an explanation as to why the answer is a myth or a fact. In their responses, they shared information such as STI stands for sexually transmitted infection and you can contract an STI the first time you have sex. A student went further by mentioning some examples of STI's such as genital herpes and syphilis. The most important aspect for me, as their lecturer, was to ensure that learning about sexuality education was taking place as I observed. Through the process of using games and as I allowed students to work collaboratively, students exchanged their answers and then replied with their best answer. This for me was an indication that sexuality education issues that were uncomfortable to talk about were now being dealt with in the learning environment. At the same time, I also provided additional explanations to ensure that students were learning about sexuality education matters. Some of my explanations included the importance of protecting yourself from HIV/AIDS and preventive measures that should be considered when faced with such challenges.

All the groups wanted to win but there was only one winner. I presented the t-shirts to them and the other teams congratulated them. The winning team was very thankful for the prize. This meant that in the future, it will be a good idea to reward students as this improves their participation in lessons and contributes towards encouragement and motivation. It also means that with full group participation, they can remember what they have learnt for a longer period. Using games to teach sexuality education through a collaborative approach, worked in a way that showed improvement in student participation as well as improving my sexuality education teaching practice.

I observed that when students worked together, they enjoyed the lesson more than when working individually. As indicated in the reflection shared by a student (Figure 4.5).

The lesson today was fun and educational. I got to learn alot about sexual education. The teacher and the classmates gave me a clear view about sexual behaviour. It was interesting talking to different people and hearing their views about this topic. I was very comfortable to talk and share my views because the teacher was open with us and made us feel comfortable. It was a great lesson.

*Student's reflection on the lesson: 24 October 2018*

#### 4.5 A student's reflection of playing a game during the lesson

As I reflected on the student's reflection, I understood that by allowing students to work collaboratively they were able to express their views on sexuality matters. In this lesson, I was able to achieve participation from all students. Importantly, I came to know that students learned sensitive information through a fun filled activity that engaged them and encouraged them to talk to each other. This became easier for me as students expressed their views, as the game went along.

Through the use of collaborative learning as a valuable pedagogical tool, I witnessed that students supported each other when working as a group and worked towards a common outcome which was winning in this case. This meant that the support that was created for each group through collaborative learning, improved my teaching practice of sexuality education.

In the next lesson, I informed the students that this lesson is a continuation of the learning outcome, Identify situations which are likely to lead to risky sexual encounters and behaviour. (Range: unwanted pregnancy, date rape, STI/HIV)." My intentions for the lesson was to bring students together and allow them to brainstorm solutions about teenage pregnancy that is currently affecting our youth. For the lesson, I prepared a case study that students had to work on collaboratively. I once again, used the same method of grouping students together

using numbers. I was happy with how the groups turned out since all groups comprised of males and females from different age groups. Once again, having different age students grouped together, was ideal for eliciting different opinions based on experience, in this case. Also, some of my students were already parents and their views were based on their perspectives as students and parents and this would be interesting to hear. I handed out the worksheets and chart paper to all students and they read the case study (Figure 4.6)

### **AMY'S STORY**

The first time I had sex I thought I was madly in love with my boyfriend. I felt more or less pressurised into it. He was very nice and loving and saying everyone else was doing it and why can't we do it? So, I just felt it was something we had to do, that I didn't have a choice. I was 16. He was 16. We were both too young. I would like to have waited for someone who was a bit more special and had a bit more respect for me.

The night I got pregnant, I was celebrating my birthday. A few days later, I told my friend we had sex and we hadn't used any contraception. She went with me to get a pregnancy test. I was so shocked when it was positive. My friend was the only person who knew. I was scared to tell people. I was afraid of how they might react. It was awful telling my parents, they didn't take it well at all. My dad wouldn't speak to me for a few days. Things are much better now. Everyone loves Katie, the baby.

Life is very difficult. I have stretch marks and I feel like everyone is looking at me in the change rooms. If I want to go to the cinema, I have to get a baby sitter for Katie, then I have to ask permission from my parents. It is difficult because my brother gets to go anywhere he wants, but even if I do go out, I have to be up at 7am in the morning to feed Katie, or to play with her. My life is so different to the lives my friends have.

It's also hard when she gets sick, because she only wants me to look after her, and it's hard. It's very hard. I'd say to young girls thinking about having sex, just think about it. Think about "If I do this, then what will happen?" Even if you don't get pregnant, different things can happen. Be careful about it. Be sure that is what you want. If you decide that you are going to have sex, talk to someone about it first, a nurse, a friend or someone older.

4.6 The case study that students worked on (<https://b4udecide.ie/teachers-youth-workers/rse-resources/>)

I informed them, that the case study consisted of seven questions and in their group, they were required to discuss the answers and the group leader had to write them on the chart paper provided. I allowed forty-five minutes for students to complete this activity. The reason for this was, I wanted students to engage in a process of brainstorming different solutions in answering the questions from the case study. As they were completing the activity, many interesting viewpoints emerged as the groups engaged with each other. I made sure I walked

around the classroom and observed the learning process. During the discussions, some of the points that were mentioned by group members included opinions of a suitable age for a woman to have a baby. Some students indicated that sixteen was too young while others said that nineteen was a suitable age to have a baby. The conversations amongst students went on with them discussing that nineteen is not an appropriate age since girls are still in their teen years and being a teen parent is difficult especially when there is no financial support. Students then went on by discussing that girls must be responsible and take precautions. They also said that boys must be responsible and protect their girlfriends. In all of these conversations, I felt that there was no need for me to interject as important learning points were being covered through collaborative learning. I also realised that important content in the sexuality education curriculum, was being addressed through these conversations.

In each group, the group leader read out the question then everybody in the group contributed to the response as the group leader wrote points on the chart provided. There was a lot of interaction going on around the topic of teenage pregnancy. This is where the combination of different ages in groups played a vital role in the process. In these discussions, students were able to share and listen to real-life situations and interact with other students who had the experience. As I moved about with a purposeful aim which was to hear part of the conversations, I realised that the older students in the groups were vocal as they shared their life experience of having babies at a young age. Those who were already parents and had experienced teenage pregnancy, were very eager to comment in the group. They gave other students advice as well and explained to them why they should not get pregnant at an early age and some of the consequences of teenage pregnancy. There was also mention of the financial cost of taking care of a baby. It was expressed that it is too expensive to support babies especially when both parents are unemployed. I also observed that the boys expressed their views as young dads. Some boys mentioned that they will take responsibility if they find themselves in such a situation whilst other boys in the group said that they will run far away and pretend it never happened.

Whilst students were busy with the classwork, I observed that working collaboratively on the issue of teenage pregnancy allowed students to voice their opinion as they made valuable input. For me, I saw collaborative learning as being beneficial in teaching sexuality education since the older students encouraged the younger students to be wiser if they found themselves in a similar situation.

Collaborative learning as a pedagogical tool worked well in teaching sexuality education as it contributed to students having an opportunity to listen to real-life situations. Through collaborative learning, students learned key points about sexuality education. Collaborative learning has allowed students to come to their own conclusions and understanding of sexuality matters without me being involved. This means that when students

are given the opportunity to engage with each other, they learn from each other whilst feeling comfortable in the learning process as is evident in Figure 4.7, which shows students working together with each other independent of the lecturer.



Figure 4.7 Students working together to complete a case study on teenage pregnancy

### **Theme 2: Creating effective discussions**

In looking for my themes, I came to realise that some of the themes that were emerging, were intertwined. Effective discussions emerged in the process of collaborative learning. After students worked collaboratively to complete their activities, the next step for them was to present their work in front of the class. Effective discussions emerged after students engaged in the process of working collaboratively. The difference between collaborative learning and effective discussions was that collaborative learning allowed students to work together to complete their activities whilst effective discussions occurred when the presentation of their work took place. Ewens (2000, p. 21) defines classroom discussion as “a diverse body of teaching techniques that emphasize participation, dialogue, and two-way communication.” In teaching sexuality education, I discovered that discussions created participation amongst students in the whole class. I established that discussions as a pedagogical approach, strengthened the possibility of an effective communication process in teaching sexuality.

The first lesson where effective discussion emerged, took place after students worked collaboratively (as mentioned in theme one) and completed labelling the image of the male and female body parts. Their completed images were now presented by the group leader to the whole class. I left the platform open for the group leaders to present their work and afterwards to allow questions from the class. I was monitoring the process and also ensuring that the student presenting was respected. Sometimes, when there is a student in

front of the class and not the lecturer, the class does not pay attention and students start talking to each other. In this case, I ensured that this did not happen by informing them to be quiet and to listen to the presentation being made.

The first group leader came forward and showed the class their completed diagram and mentioned all the parts of the human body such as the ankle, chest, breast, thighs and also explained the function of some body parts which was not necessary at that moment. As the lecturer, I thought that the group did a little extra which meant to me that they were comfortable with each other. When he was done, I gave him the opportunity to ask the class if anyone had any questions or comments. Some comments made by students were, “Is it necessary for men to have muscles and train all the time? Why do men want to have a six pack?” These comments prompted discussions and different viewpoints on the physiological differences between males and that of females. Some of their responses included that a six-pack is only for models. It was because of these presentations, that discussions arose, which I viewed as a good pedagogical approach to get students to start talking as a class. As one presenter was done, then the next group leader came forward. Whilst interaction amongst students took place, I observed the easiness amongst students. They were very relaxed in asking their classmates questions.

To give an additional example of the nature of the questions and comments raised in these open discussions, one of the student asked a question, “*Why do men want to become women because the images clearly indicate the differences between the two genders?*” A very strong and intense discussion commenced around lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) issues. It was interesting to listen to the thoughts of students who commented on how they view such individuals. One response to this from a student was that these are human beings and in his view, it is not wrong to belong to one of these categories. He was okay with it. A female student then raised her hand and commented from a religious point of view and said that she believes it is unacceptable to like your own gender. Those are not normal people. These comments were an outcome of the space that had been created through discussions that allowed students to ask questions freely. It indicated that although sexuality education was sensitive to talk about, these are questions that prompted interest in students. They wanted to hear how their classmates view such issues. I found effective discussions good because I believe sharing thoughts on sexuality education took place and important content was also learned in the process. As their lecturer, I felt that important issues about sexuality education had been highlighted and addressed in the lesson which reassured me by knowing that students were learning about sexuality.

In the next lesson the learning outcome was, “*Describe the biological and physiological differences between male and female.*” For this lesson, students were asked to create a chart to show what they would like to look like or would not like to look like. The purpose of this activity was to allow students to talk and discuss their physical attributes and to establish how they see themselves from a physical point of view. I wanted to get a sense of what physical characteristics they were aware of and how they view their own bodies by wanting to be like a particular individual.

In preparation for the lesson, I had gathered resources such as colour paper, glue sticks, chart paper, newspaper and magazines. Students worked individually but shared the magazines and newspaper. I asked students to find pictures of what they would like to look like and what they would not like to look like. Thereafter, I asked them to paste the pictures on the chart paper (Figure 4.8).



Figure 4.8: Student chart on what they want to be like or not

Whilst students were busy working, I could only hear the noises of pages turning over. I walked around ensuring that all students were completing their work. When they were all done, I then asked them to present their charts to the class. In the first presentation, one student mentioned that they would like to be like “*Ronaldo*” and “*Messi*” with a big deep voice. In presenting, a female student shared her chart and mentioned that “*I would not like to be like this girl because her skirt is too short*”. The other student then asked her a question, “*How do you feel about girls who wear short skirts and dresses?*” She answered by giving her view about girls who wear short skirts are not regarded as good girls and boys can take advantage of girls who show off their bodies. I observed that these type of questions opened conversations on sexuality and students learned content at the same time.

I discovered that through discussions, we took a sensitive topic and created some fun in the lesson. Very seldom, do students freely talk about sexuality so openly but through discussion among students, they were able to express their thoughts and emotions about what they would like to look like or not. I got an opportunity to step back and allow the voice of the students to emerge in the lesson.

The next activity whereby effective discussions emerged was from the case study discussed in the theme “collaborative learning.” After students completed the case study activity (theme one), we then proceeded to the next step of discussing the answers as a class. I started the class discussion by asking any group to answer the first question which was “*Why did Amy have sex?*” I received a variety of responses. Their responses included the following:

*“Amy was pressurised by her boyfriend to have sex”*

*“Amy was madly in love with her boyfriend so she thought what she was doing is the right thing and so on.”*

It was followed by the next question, “*Is this a good reason to have sex?*”

The response from one student for this question was:

*“No it is not a good reason to have sex, before having sex you have to think about circumstances and the outcomes after you had sex.”*

We then discussed what these responses meant for the understanding of Amy and her experiences. Students were able to question each other and ask for elaborations of responses, which added to the understanding of the task.

I carried on with the same sequence until all questions were answered and comments and suggestions were made by students. As the teacher, I monitored and observed how much input was coming from students. I realised that effective discussions as a pedagogical strategy were helpful in teaching sexuality matters as students became familiar with what could be an uncomfortable topic and moved away from being shy in the lessons.

From the different type of responses I received, it was evident that fruitful discussions took place among students in the class. This showed me that through the process of creating effective discussions, the teaching of sexuality education was improved. It also indicated that through using discussions as a pedagogical tool, issues around sexuality becomes easier to talk about. Since we are aware that students were uncomfortable to mention such issues freely during lessons, the discussions allowed them to open up and communicate with me as their lecturer and also with the peers in sharing their thoughts.

As students were involved in the discussions, I realised that effective discussions that are real and relating to real life situations experiences, capture students' attention and they want to be heard about how this impacts on their lives. Through the use of discussions, as a pedagogical approach in teaching sexuality education, I have realised how this strategy can create a platform that contributes to teaching a sensitive topic. Engaging in these open conversations, indicated that effective discussions is meaningful in lessons and it contributes to an improvement in how sexuality education is taught.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I responded to my second research question: "*How do students experience and respond to my teaching of the sexuality component of the Life Orientation curriculum?*" In answering this question, two themes were identified through the process of data analysis. These themes were further explained and I showed how they contributed to and improved my sexuality education practice.

The next chapter is a continuation of how I addressed my second research question, "*My pedagogical learning and how this learning has improved how I teach sexuality education.*"

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE SILVER LINING IN THE CLOUD OF SEXUALITY

#### Introduction

I began this self-study journey, to learn about myself and how my personal history influenced my sexuality education teaching practice. I continued this journey in exploring how I can improve on teaching sexuality education so that my students will be able to achieve the learning outcome of the sexuality education curriculum. I also explored and discovered new pedagogical approaches in collaboration with my critical friends. In chapter four, I began by answering my second research question: “*How do students experience and respond to my teaching of the sexuality education component of the Life Orientation curriculum?*” In this regard, two themes were identified that could lead to an improvement in my practice and this was discussed in the previous chapter.

This chapter is a continuation of chapter four. In this chapter four lessons were taught. Here I outline the four interesting pedagogical learnings that were identified through classroom teaching, in order to improve my sexuality education teaching practice. This chapter explains each pedagogical learning and how this learning was experienced by my students. Chapter Five further highlights the observations, challenges and reflections of each pedagogical learning.

The pedagogical learning discussed below emerged through the process of data analysis. This included the following:

- Using role-play to teach sexuality education
- Using educational videos in teaching sexuality
- Exploring risky sexual encounters through collage making
- Engaging other professional partners in teaching sexuality.

From a social cultural perspective, I believed that I must acknowledge the value of active learning in my lessons (Richardson, 1997). Therefore, this pedagogical learning contributed to active learning. From a social cultural perspective, I understood that my students came from diverse backgrounds and I aimed to create a learning environment that was inclusive of this disparity in their demographics (Gerhard & Mayer-Smith, 2008).

### **Pedagogical Learning 1: Using role-play to teach sexuality education**

According to Taylor, Dlamini, Khanyile and Mpanza (2012, p. 442), “through a role play, the relevant information is personalised; the acting engages learners emotionally and this contributes to changing perceptions and perhaps behaviour.” I, therefore, chose to teach this lesson using role-play to allow for that personalised engagement with students as they learn relevant information on sexuality education with the intention of influencing their behaviour. I commence this section by providing the learning outcome, *“Identify situations which are likely to lead to risky sexual encounters and behaviour. (Range: unwanted pregnancy, date rape, STI/HIV.”*

#### **Lesson introduction**

I informed students that we were going to act out a role-play about situations that lead to risky sexual behaviour. I felt it was important that I enquire if students understood what a role-play was. I found that some students had some knowledge of it while others did not respond. Based on the lack of response from others, I then explained to the students what a role-play is and how we were going to engage with role-play in our lesson. In my explanation to the students, I mentioned that a role-play is where you are given a scenario and you have to take on a specific role and act out the scenario. I informed them that each student will play a character in the role-play. Students were quiet at first and I thought at that moment that they did not want to participate in the role-play. I felt I needed to ask if they understood and to my relief the students responded with a resounding “yes”. I was then confident enough to proceed with the lesson.

#### **Lesson activity in progress**

To prepare the students for the role-play, I randomly allocated students to five different groups. When grouping students, I ensured that each group comprised of a mixture of male and female students. The reason for this was to ensure that each group had a fair representation of gender, for the role-play to be realistic and practical. Students were then requested to think of different situations that lead to youth engaging in risky sexual encounters. At first, I wanted to create a topic for each group, but then I decided otherwise. The reason for this was that I wanted the scenarios to have feeling and emotion and most of all, to relate to the students’ real-life situations. I believed that the real-life scenarios created by students would have an impact in getting students to think differently which might lead to changes in behaviour and perceptions.

I then gave students, in their groups, thirty minutes to rehearse and prepare for their role-play. Students were told that in the thirty minutes, they had to develop a scenario in their groups that leads to risky sexual encounters. To make the instruction clearer to students, I gave an example. In the example, I described a scenario of an older man picking up a younger girl in a very luxury car and spoiling her with money and gifts in return for sexual favours. Students refer to this type of person as a “*sugar daddy*.” Once students understood what was required of them, I then informed them that they were allowed to go outside and prepare. I viewed the outdoor space as ideal for preparation, since the classroom space is small and the noise levels will be too high if all groups rehearsed inside. Also, I did not want students to see each other’s role-play before it was properly rehearsed.

Students left the classroom and went outside to different places where they rehearsed their role-plays before returning to class to act out their scenes. Figure 5.1 shows students preparing outside for their role-play.



Figure 5.1: Students preparing for the role-play

After students had rehearsed, they returned to class and were ready to present their work. As they presented, I found it interesting to observe the type of scenarios that were created by the students. Through the scenarios, I was able to see and realise exactly what my students were currently dealing with and what they prioritised as issues of concern. In their role-plays, students addressed issues through their characters—issues such as sugar daddy’s spending money on young girls, a drunken man using sexual violence on a girl in a night club, vulnerable girls riding with men in fancy cars, men intoxicated with alcohol and having unprotected sex, teenage pregnancy and so forth. To illustrate, I share one of the scenarios written by one group of students.

Lerato: Calls friend...ring....ring.....ring

Thando: Hi girlfriend

Lerato: Hi...I'm bored at home, my parents are out for the weekend and my brothers are gone to be with their girlfriends. I'm home alone. Come stay so that we can go out to the night club and have some drinks.

Thando: Cool! Call my mum and tell her I'm coming over to stay but do not tell her that your parents are not at home.

Lerato: Ok will do madam! See you soon.

Lerato: Calls friends mum ring...ring...ring...

Thandi (mum): Hello!

Lerato: Hello Aunt Thandi, How are you?

Thandi: I'm well and how are you doing?

Lerato: Im ok aunt, can Noluthando come over and stay, we have an assignment due on Monday and I need help.

Thandi: No problem it's important that you girls study hard and pass your exams.

Lerato: Call friend again ring....ring...ring...

Thando: Answers! What did my mum say?

Lerato: Yes ,you can come over.

Thando: Good girl. See you soon!

*The two girls meet and go to the night club. At the night club they meet with another two friends. They all having fun drinking and dancing then student 2 is approached by a good looking man.*

Langa (man): Hi sweetheart can I buy you a drink. You are so beautiful.

Thando: Yes, and thank you for the compliment.

Langa: Do you want another drink?

Thando: Yes please

*In the meantime the other girls were dancing and enjoying themselves without noticing student 2. By this time, student 2 is now very drunk.*

Langa: Let's go for a walk outside.

Thando: Ok, but what about my friends

Langa: Leave your friends they having fun.

*When student 2 and the man go outside, they had unprotected sex in the car.  
The man then leaves her alone and drives off.*

Thando: Goes back into the club looks for her friends and tells them she wants to leave.

*The role-play ended whereby she finds out that she is six weeks pregnant and doesn't know who the father of her baby is.*

Watching the students act out their role-plays, I realised that students are aware of the situations that are happening around them and the consequences attached to them due to being involved in risky sexual behaviour. There is also a level of understanding of the position of girls in society that places them in constant danger.

All this learning was achieved through role-plays that permitted laughter in the process of learning. There was so much of laughter in the lesson between the students and myself, because it was their own creation, the students were able to engross themselves in their characters and were fully immersed in the lesson. This taught me that sometimes, whilst sexuality is hard to speak about in the classroom environment, we can still engage with it through other learning processes that capture the students' attention such as acting out a role-play. Figure 5.2 shows students participating in their different role-plays.





Figure 5.2: Each picture represents a scene played out by two groups of students as their peers observed

**Concluding the lesson**

At the end of the lesson, I asked students to de-role their characters. To de-role their characters means to take their roles off, after acting and come back to their normal selves. This was important as I did not want students to leave the classroom with the same characters they played in the role-play so as to prevent them from name calling or teasing each other. I then requested students to reflect on paper, what it was that they had learnt in this lesson. By asking students to write down their reflections, it gave me a better understanding of whether or not, role-play had worked to teach sexuality content. Importantly, had they learnt sexuality content through role-play and what learning outcomes of sexuality still needed to be addressed in other lessons. Figure 5.3 is some of the students' responses on what they have learnt from the role-plays.

I have learnt that many youth fall pregnant or go into sex contact without knowing the result of it, they get un-planned pregnancies drop out school end-up being a parent when they are still very young

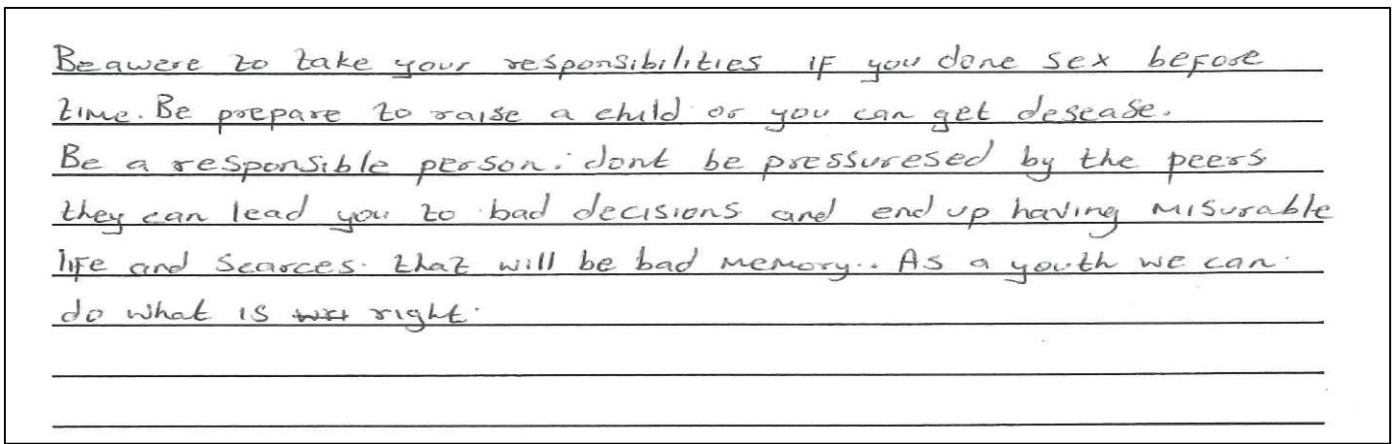


Figure 5.3 Students' written responses on what they learnt from the role-play

**Observations**

During my sexuality education lesson on role-play, I observed that students were not bored. I also observed that students moved out of their comfort zones and enjoyed playing different characters. Through observation, I realised that students enjoy innovative pedagogical approaches when sexuality education is being taught. Reading students written responses, I felt that there was still some learning of sexuality education that needed to be addressed for example, a student indicated that a person can get a disease. I realised that this point needed to be taught and the different types of diseases explained which was also a part of the prescribed curriculum.

**Reflections**

As I reflected, I realised that using role-play as a pedagogical tool, was beneficial in getting students to understand what risky sexual encounters were. Role-play created an avenue of teaching sexuality content in an atmosphere that was conducive. Role-play also created a platform for students to participate without shying away from the topic. From this experience, I realised that there are pedagogical strategies that can be used in teaching a sensitive topic such as sexuality education, which in this case was role-play. As I further reflected I realised that role-play brings students together and allows them to connect with each other thus leading to positive teaching environment. When students connect with each other, they learn from each other. My task as their lecturer, was to create and facilitate that open space for students to learn about sexuality. Within this space, students were able to find common grounds for respect, comfort with each other and sharing. These I found to be important elements in any classroom that deals with sexuality matters. I found that even though they were controlling the space, my availability, as a support structure in creating these role-plays was important. They became partners in their own learning through the process of role-play.

I also realised that for future lessons, through the students' consent, these role-plays can also be played out to different students who are in different levels. I reflected that if the higher levels can act these scenarios to the lower level it is a teaching method that can be used to teach sexuality content to other class groups. I have found that in tertiary education the first year students tend to look up to the third year or fourth year students and even at times see them as role models.

### **Pedagogical learning 2: Using educational videos in teaching sexuality**

Another pedagogical learning came from a lesson where I used a You-Tube video. The lesson was on the physical appearances of people and how they felt about their bodies. In introducing this lesson, I wanted to use something that will make an impact and is different from my usual teaching methods. According to Brame (2016, p. 1), "educational videos have become an important part of higher education, providing an important content-delivery tool." Therefore, I saw this as an opportunity to show relevant educational videos during my sexuality education lessons, to capture the students' attention and focus their thinking. In this instance, the videos showed different genders talking about their physical appearances and how it affects their sexuality. I wanted the students watch on the video, what Zhang, Briggs, Zhou and Nunamake (2006, p. 17) termed "realistic scenes" of issues included in the sexuality education content.

To prepare for the viewing, I had to watch the video content and identify realistic scenes first, before I allowed students to view the video. In doing this, I wanted to be satisfied with the content so that the video was suitable for students to watch and no inappropriate words were included in the video. Before I had selected the one they watched, I had watched different videos searching for the most suitable and appropriate video that integrated the learning outcomes allocated for this lesson. In the end, I had identified three short videos which were about ten minutes playtime each. The video included talks on how boys and girls feel about their bodies and this was related to the learning outcome, "*Describe the biological and physiological differences between males and females.*"

In introducing the video, I was able to step back and allow a virtual tool to draw students' attention and get them engaged.

#### **Lesson introduction**

To facilitate this lesson, I took my students to the computer lab. In the computer lab, I had pre-set the You-Tube video for them to watch. After they were seated, I told the students that they were going to watch three videos for this lesson. While they watched, I asked them to listen and write down all the positives and negatives about what they see and hear from the video about physical appearances.

### Lesson activity in progress

Once they were seated, I also informed them that all three videos will be played one after the other. Thereafter, we will have our class discussion. Students agreed and I saw eagerness and anticipation displayed in their faces. Figure 5.4 shows students watching the YouTube videos.

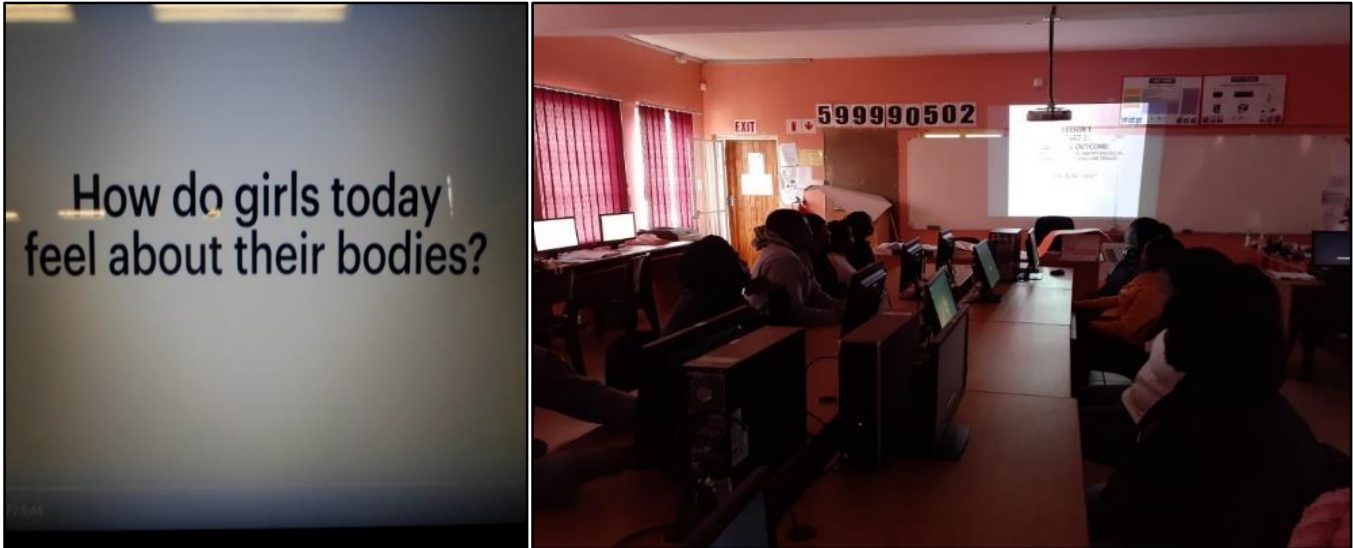


Figure 5.4 Students watching the educational video on physical appearances of boys and girls.

The video showed how girls and boys feel about their bodies and what makes them feel insecure. The girl in the video mentioned that it is not about the face but more about the body. In the video, she explains that people always comment on how chubby a person is by looking at the body rather than looking at the face.

### Conclusion of the lesson

When all three videos ended, the first thing I asked the students was if they agree with what was discussed on the video. The reason for asking them this, was to hear the different views on physical appearances of boys and girls. The following were some of the comments made by students.

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <i>Amara:</i>     | <i>Boys are not attracted to our faces but other parts of our bodies. So I agree with the video when the girl explained about how beautiful her face is doesn't matter to her.</i>  |
| <i>Neliswa:</i>   | <i>Social media talks about the attractiveness in a woman's thigh gap. Social media influences how we feel about our bodies as women. The girl in the video does not like her legs because she says she does not have a thigh gap. If she does not focus on social media, she will like her legs.</i> |
| <i>Siyabonga:</i> | <i>I want to have a six pack like the boy in the video because I believe a six pack will make me look handsome</i>  |

The majority of the students' comments were affirmative. They explained that many people do not often like the way they look and always want to be like somebody else. Students were comfortable about expressing themselves on body images and why some people do not like what they look like.

### **Observations**

Whilst students were engrossed in the video, I observed if there were any gestures from students in response to what they were watching on the video. When, in a scene on the video, boys spoke about wanting to have a six-pack, I observed that one student was flexing his muscles and showing his neighbour. To me, this indicated that students were relating to the content being watched on what they think and feel about their bodies. This also showed their interest and enjoyment in watching the video. Through observation, I realised that educational videos as a teaching tool, is meaningful in sexuality education lessons. It created an environment that led to interesting discussions on sensitive issues.

### **Reflections**

When I reflected on this lesson, I found that I should have began the lesson by asking students to write down what they like and dislike about their physical appearances first, before allowing them to watch the video. This might have helped them to compare their own views to what was said by the boys and girls on the video. This would have made them realise that they are not the only ones who think that their appearance is not good enough. Another reflection occurred to me that students can also be given time to search for you-tube videos that describes the learning outcome *describe the biological and physiological differences between males and females.*” I reflected that by allowing students to conduct their own video search and then showing it the whole class can allow them to become involved in the lesson as they would now prepare their videos. I reflected that Wi-Fi connectivity is available to students and as their lecturer I should also find ways to use these resources for teaching and learning purposes.

I reflected that you-tube video is a virtual tool that engages student's interest. Since students have access to such resources and engage in social media platforms I see this as an opportunity to allow students to make use of these resources for educational reasons.

### **Pedagogical learning 3: Exploring risky sexual encounters through collage making**

The next pedagogical learning came from a lesson where students were asked to create a collage on the learning outcome, *“Identify situations which are likely to lead to risky sexual encounters and behaviour (Range: unwanted pregnancy, date rape, STI/HIV).”*

To facilitate the lesson, I chose collage making, to get students to practically engage with and reflect on what was to be learned. According to Butler-Kisber and Poldma (2010), collage making is an accessible arts-based activity because whether you are a beginner or an expert, you can cut and paste pictures and eventually get a feeling of fulfilment from the finished product. As indicated by Magubane (2015), collage making can also be as an inclusive learning process, because each learner is allowed to participate in the lesson. In selecting collage making, my intentions were to get all students, actively participating in the activity through the process of cutting and pasting as they connect with the expected outcome of the lesson. Sexuality education is a sensitive topic to teach and I felt that in order to get students connected with the content without having to feel uncomfortable with the use of words, the collage was beneficial. Therefore, the collage making process required learners to engage themselves in deep thinking to discover what they wanted to express through visual images and to carefully select each relevant image (Masinga, 2013). I followed the advice of Norvig (2012) who explains that the best time for a child to learn is when they are practising actively. The collage making process is a very active process and it is through this collage making process, that sexuality education had been explored.

### **Introduction to the lesson**

I commenced the lesson by explaining to students that we were going to focus on issues and situations that lead to teenage pregnancy and risky sexual encounters. I communicated to them that they are going to look through magazines and newspapers, which I requested them to bring to class as well the ones that I had brought to class during my preparation.

My instructions to students were as follows:

Your topic in this activity is: Identifying situations that lead to teenage pregnancy and risky sexual encounters

- You are going to work in your same groups that you worked with in your previous lesson.
- The magazines will be shared amongst all of you in the group.
- You are required to create a collage using pictures from the magazines that describes what you perceive to be risky sexual encounters.
- A collage is a collection of pictures that tells a story and describes your feelings about a topic.
- When the correct pictures are chosen in your group, you will then cut and paste these pictures on the board which I have provided.
- You have forty-five minutes to complete the work and fifteen minutes to present your collage.

### **Lesson activity in progress**

Whilst the groups were working to put the collage together, students had to communicate with each other as they identified suitable pictures that described their own understanding of risky situations that lead to risky sexual behaviour. When working on the collage, the students were able to converse in a way that did not bring discomfort for them. Figure 5.5 shows students busy with the task of looking for relevant pictures in magazines



Figure 5.5 Students looking through magazines, newspapers and cutting and pasting pictures

### **Observation**

As I walked around, monitoring the process, I saw that students required very little assistance from me. In their groups, they were cutting and pasting pictures. Stationery such as scissors and glue sticks were shared amongst students. This showed me that a good spirit of sharing and helping each other was identified in the collage making process. I realised that the use of the collage as a pedagogical tool to teach a sensitive topic helps students feel free to participate. They were able to express themselves using images in a way that words failed.

### **Conclusion of the lesson**

When the time was up, the group leaders got ready to present their collages to the rest of the class. I asked for any volunteers who wished to go first and a group volunteered. The process continued until all groups had a chance to present their work. Figure 5.6 is a collage completed by the first group that presented



Figure 5.6: Example of a collage done by the first group

Group leaders were each given five minutes to present their work. For the first presentation, the group leader identified alcohol and drugs through images as the main contributor that leads to risky sexual encounters. The student explained a story of how the consumption of these substances, can influence an individual to take part in activities that are risky. In the collage, the student also gave an explanation of how a drunk person can have unprotected sex and become HIV positive or become pregnant. The student said, *“If you are drunk, then you are not thinking right and therefore you can do anything and then next week you will discover that you are pregnant or HIV positive.”* In another presentation by group two, they told a story through images of how girls get raped and become pregnant. They also touched on gender-based violence and how women are at the forefront of this pandemic.

In their presentations, I discovered that collage making was very successful because students were discussing real-life situations. The situations that were raised through collage- making allowed students to talk and deepen their understanding of sexuality.

In my reflective journal I wrote the following phrase:

*A collage has helped me to teach a sensitive topic in class whereby students participated without any discomfort. (Personal Reflection, 5 November 2018)*

## **Reflections**

As I reflected on this activity, I discovered that by using the collage as a pedagogical tool in my lesson to teach sexuality education, it was an eye-opener to help me see through the eyes of my students. Through my reflections, I also realised that maybe the next time, I should consider allowing students to complete this activity as homework done individually as this will allow them more time to complete the collage. I also, realised that homework given to students should be interesting and fun so when completed at home it won't be considered just another chore that they are compelled to do. I reflected that at home students do have resources around them that can also be used in designing a collage. Using different resources can display student's creativity in completing the collage as homework.

### **Pedagogical learning 4: Engaging other professional partners in teaching sexuality education**

The last pedagogical learning was introduced in a lesson where I invited a nurse from the nearby hospital to encourage and motivate my students on sexuality education issues that are affecting them in their everyday lives. This lesson was connected to the learning outcome, *“Identify situations which are likely to lead to risky sexual encounters and behaviour (Range: unwanted pregnancy, date rape, STI/HIV).”*

I thought it was important that I invite a professional guest speaker to come and engage with the students as part of information giving and educate my students on issues such as teenage pregnancy, rape, drugs and HIV/AIDS since it was included in the prescribed curriculum. In my planning for the lesson, I had a conversation with the professional guest speaker before she addressed the students. In our conversation, I explained to her the need for having a professional person talk to students and inform them of the support that is provided, should they find themselves in any of these situations. I also explained and showed her the prescribed curriculum document of how her motivational talk connects to the learning outcomes. I also informed her that the content she will be addressing with students was part of their classroom learning.

I believed that sometimes it was important to get an outside stakeholder who can educate and provide guidance to students on how to prevent such things from occurring and how to protect themselves from such situations. I chose this type of pedagogical approach because I wanted students to engage deeply with the topic and to feel free to ask questions that relates to the learning outcome. I felt that by having a professional in the classroom for the lesson, she would be able to answer questions from students to which I may not have had clear answers. I believe that her responses would be beneficial since she deals with such issues frequently in her career and is more informed about sexuality.

## Introduction to the lesson

The lesson commenced with much anticipation from my students because I had informed them the previous day that a guest speaker would be present for the next lesson. I informed my students that a nurse from a nearby hospital would be attending our lesson to talk to them about HIV/AIDS, alcohol and substance abuse and rape. I explained to students that it was important for a professional person to address them on issues that are affecting their lives since she can offer the necessary support and refer students to relevant support systems should they find themselves in such situations. I indicated to them that this was an opportunity for them to ask questions as she was in a better position to cover the sexuality content from a professional point of view.

I welcomed the guest speaker and introduced her to my students and then handed over the first part of the lesson to her. The reason for the immediate handover was so, I do not set the tone for what was to be said and discussed with the students. Figure 5.7 is of a nurse from the local hospital nurse engaging with students on sexuality and teenage pregnancy

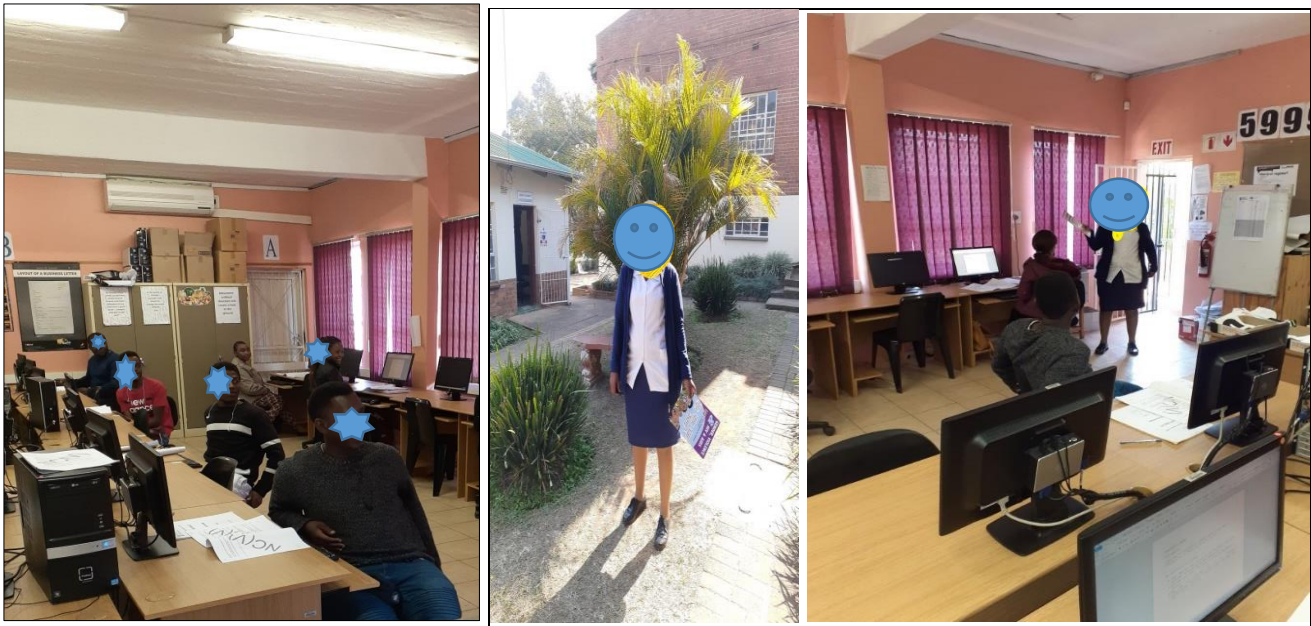


Figure 5.7 A local hospital nurse engaging with students on sexuality and teenage pregnancy

She began by introducing herself and then gave us a brief history of her qualifications and her job description at the hospital. She then motivated students to stay away from drugs and alcohol and explained the physiological and psychological effects it can have on the body. She further advised students on the precautions that they should take to avoid contracting HIV/AIDS and falling pregnant at an early age. As she was addressing the students, I saw how she managed to captivate students. I chose to sit at the back of the classroom and listened while observing my students as they listened very intensively. Also, at the back of the

classroom, I had a good view of all students in the lesson. She spoke for thirty minutes of the lesson and then opened the platform for any questions that students wished to ask.

The discussions then stemmed from the type of questions that students asked the guest speaker as indicated below:

*How long does it take for a person to stop doing drugs?*

*Where can a person go for help if they get raped?*

*How long do I have to wait to have sex after I take the pill?*

Some of her responses to these questions included the following:

Every person recovers differently during rehab.

Normally, a sixty-day program will help an individual to fully detox.

Depending on the type of drug a person took, the withdrawal symptoms vary.

The first person you should tell if you find yourself in a rape crisis is a close friend or family member.

By doing this they will become the first witness to the case and also for support.

A rape victim should go to the police station and you have the right to write your statement in a private room and speak to a female officer.

It is also important that a rape victim take antiretrovirals within seventy-two hours of penetration to prevent the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.

It takes seven days of consistent use, meaning taking the pill every day at the same time for seven days to protect you against pregnancy. However, to protect you from sexually transmitted infections, it is advisable to use condoms. The pill can prevent you from pregnancy but not an STI.

Her responses were very clinical, and I realised that sometimes that it is important to do, to give clear information and allowed them to lead to student questions. Also, while she was answering and giving feedback, other students also commented and I noted good discussions were taking place around sexuality with comments such as:

*We should stay away from friends who want us to do drugs. It's good to get tested for HIV so we know our status.*

I observed that many questions were focusing on HIV/AIDS, rape and drug abuse and support structures for students. Sexual violence against women was another strong point that students brought up and felt that they need more support. A student claimed:

*Police officers don't do much when a woman reports that their partners are abusing them. Are there any other support services for us as women that can help us when we are beaten?*

I felt the conversation was timely, as gender-based violence is currently one of the major issues here in South Africa. I lost a friend due to women abuse and whilst the lesson brought back memories, it was good to see that something is being done about it and students are aware of the pain it causes in life.

As students were engaged in discussions with the guest speaker, I discovered that their interest levels increased in learning about sexuality. They also followed her manner of discussion and asked very straightforward questions. This meant that whilst sexuality is a sensitive topic, having a professional person such as a nurse to motivate and discuss such issues with students, allowed them to be free in the lesson and speak up. I also realised that above the need to know about issues, students want to know, how one goes about seeking help. The guest speaker was able to provide such information on where direct support can be accessed for students and for this, I was content with the lesson.

### **Observation**

During this lesson, I had observed that an external stakeholder used as a pedagogical tool to teach sexuality filled in the gaps in the prescribed curriculum where I could not teach as their lecturer. I realised that the use of a professional person such as a nurse simply made things easier for me in the classroom. I as the lecturer do not always have to be the bearer of information. The teaching and engaging in such areas of learning is a joint responsibility. As their lecturer, I need to be aware of those resources and make them physically available for them. I also observed and realised that using the professional nurse strengthened my sexuality education lessons as she engaged with my students and linked prescribed content to her existing medical knowledge.

### **Conclusion of the lesson**

At the end of the lesson, she thanked the students for their cooperation and all the questions they posed to her. She also brought different pamphlets for students to read at home. She then mentioned that the discussions that took place in this classroom were very fruitful. I believed that by her comment that she has enjoyed being part of our lesson and educating my students at the same time.

When she left, I concluded the lesson by asking students if they enjoyed the lesson and if they took anything away from the conversation. To this, I got a resounding “*Yes, we learnt some things that we did not know*”.

For the remainder of the time, they randomly shared what they felt they learned from the interaction.

## Reflection

As I reflected on the use of a professional person in my lesson, to teach aspects of sexuality, I contemplated that the next time I do invite a professional person to address a different cohort of students, I will request that students carry out research prior to the lesson and write down questions where they have difficulty understanding and require in-depth explanations. I believe that by carrying out this research process, the students would get more information from the professional nurse. I realised that in the process of researching on their own and write down their questions, learning could take place. Figure 5.8 is an example of one of the pamphlets given to students by the nurse. However, I have come to realise and appreciate that additional teaching resources are available outside the teacher. It is I who needs to identify what are the needs of the students and make the necessary arrangement to have available. More so on areas where there are those that are experts on the matter.

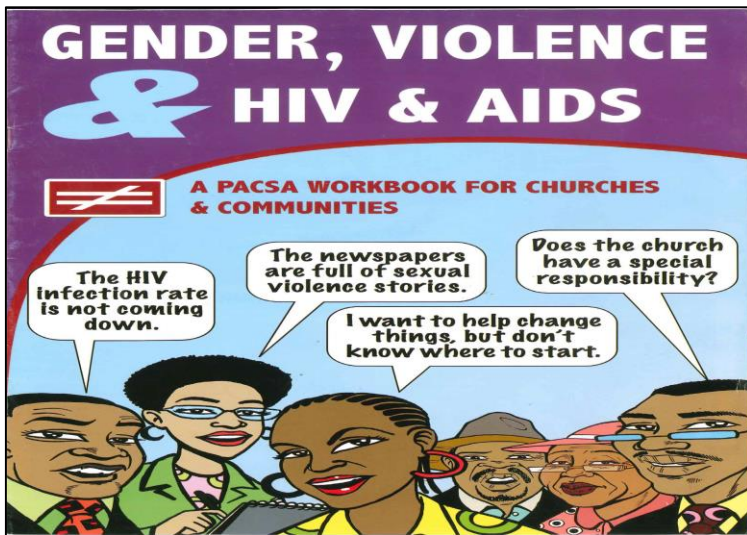


Figure 5.8: An example of one of the pamphlets given to students by the invited nurse.

## Conclusion

This chapter was a continuation of how I addressed my second critical question for this study, “How do students experience and respond to my teaching of the sexuality component of the Life Orientation curriculum?”

I identified the four pedagogical learnings from my lessons to answer this question.

In this chapter, I found that when students are engaged in different pedagogical learnings, the lesson becomes enhanced thus contributing to students’ participation. Furthermore, I discovered that in teaching sexuality education, the activities that are designed for the respective learning outcomes are paramount in ensuring that students will engage fully with the lesson. I also learnt that because of the sensitivity of the topic, sexuality

education, it is important to allow students to initiate conversations as this will also lead to students being able to talk freely and openly. When students talked about sexuality freely and felt comfortable to participate, then it made me realise that my sexuality teaching practice had improved.

## **CHAPTER SIX: THE BEGINNING OF A REFORMED SEXUALITY EDUCATION PRACTITIONER**

### **Introduction**

The focus and purpose of my study was to explore how I, as a LO lecturer, can improve the way I currently teach the sexuality education content of the prescribed curriculum. To achieve this purpose, in the previous chapter, I showed how the relevant learning material was enacted in the lesson and I also gave an account of, how my students experienced and responded to my lessons. Chapter Five provided answers to my second research question, “*How do students experience and respond to my teaching of the sexuality component of the Life Orientation curriculum?*”

Chapter Six being the final chapter, is where I discuss what I have learnt through this journey of engaging in a self- study research project. I explained what I have learnt through this learning process of seeking how my lessons have improved through a variety of new and innovative pedagogical strategies. I also point out the positive impact that self-study methodology had on my personal and professional learning.

### **Review of the thesis**

In chapter one, the focus and purpose of the study were described which was then followed by the rationale. Key concepts that were used in this study were further elucidated. In this chapter, the three research questions were included and clear explanations of the theoretical perspectives along with the methodological approach adopted in this study were provided. The key message for me from this chapter is that when an educator wishes to improve on his/her educational practice, a self-study methodology is the most appropriate research methodology to employ.

In chapter two, I described the road I took to embark on my journey of improvement of my sexuality education practice, beginning with my research methodology which was comprehensively clarified. I then provided rigorous information about my research setting and research participants including my critical friends. I described the data generation tools and the research tools used in the study and presented this information in a coherent narrative. I then went on further by discussing the data representation and the ethical considerations mandatory for the study to have continued. I concluded chapter two by emphasising how I attempted to establish trustworthiness for study.

In chapter three, I showed how I addressed my first research question, “*How have my lived experiences contributed to my pedagogical choices when I teach the sexuality component in the life orientation curriculum?*”

I discussed and recalled past experiences in my life that were presented through different stages of growing up. I also gave an account of the role religion had played in my home when sexuality education issues were brought up. I showed how, through the process of my personal history self-study, my learning included, “*acknowledging cultural practices, establishing positive relationships with students, learning through games, learning through role-play and learning through using art in the lesson.*”

The key message in this chapter was that my personal history influenced my choices in my teaching practice of sexuality education so I learned that lecturers like myself when planning their lessons, must look back at their own experiences and personal history to improve on how they teach sexuality education.

In chapter four, I attempted to answer my second research question, “*How do students experience and respond to my teaching of the sexuality component of the Life Orientation curriculum?*” In this chapter, the learning outcomes that were allocated to the lesson was explained using a table. The chapter then included the process I chose in identifying patterns in the data generated from the different lessons. I also explained how the themes and interesting pedagogical learnings were unpacked using a concept map. These themes were *collaborative learning* and *creating effective discussions*. In this chapter, I also highlighted the different activities that were taught under each theme. I included students’ experiences of the lesson and the content that was taught in each lesson.

The key message from this chapter was that when an educator explores a new method of teaching sexuality, students automatically become interested in the lesson. Another highlight for me in chapter four points out that when students are engaged in activities that make them laugh, the participation level of students, increases.

Chapter Five was a continuation of my second research question, “*How do students experience and respond to my teaching of the sexuality component of the Life Orientation curriculum?*” This chapter covered the pedagogical learnings that were introduced in my sexuality education lessons such as educational videos, role-play, the participation of a motivational speaker and collage making. Chapter Five shows how sexuality education lessons were improved using these different pedagogical strategies.

The key message of this chapter was that at certain times, when teaching sexuality education, it is better to introduce the topic to the students with the help of an expert in the field as this contributes to the knowledge in sexuality education that students must acquire.

Chapter Six is the concluding chapter of this thesis. In this chapter, I mentioned what I have learnt through this entire process of a self-study journey. I also share aspects of what I planned to do differently in moving forward in my profession. This chapter also addressed my third research question what *can I learn from my teaching experiences to improve my teaching practice of the Life Orientation curriculum?* This chapter further discusses my personal and professional learning in a self-study research. My methodological learning is highlighted as I explained what I have learned through undertaking a self-study.

The key message in this chapter is that as a lecturer, I must always aim for effective teaching of sexuality education. This achieved through, exploring all innovative pedagogical strategies that would allow learner participation and learning.

### **My Personal and Professional Learning**

As indicated at the beginning of this thesis, my rationale for this study was to explore how I, as a LO lecturer can improve how I teach the sexuality education content. Through this self-journey, I discovered that in order to improve my sexuality education teaching practice, the socio-cultural theoretical perspective played a critical role in helping me understand the socio-cultural background of my students. Through this process, I learnt that improvement in teaching sexuality education, can only take place once I understand that learning was socially constructed. This meant that I needed to pay attention to my students' backgrounds and plan my lessons accordingly, to be able to accommodate the diversity of students.

Taking a social-cultural perspective has helped me to understand that sexuality education can be taught effectively when lecturers understand that students come from different cultural backgrounds and how they behave and react to sexuality education lessons, is a reflection of what was taught at home about sexuality. This can help lecturers create lessons that make students feel comfortable to participate in. John-Steiner and Mahn (1996 p. 204) explain, "as more educators become aware of the board scope of the socio-cultural theory, they will develop practical applications that will broaden and strengthen this theoretical framework." I learned that lecturers need to become aware and familiar with the role that the socio-cultural theory plays in teaching sexuality education and how this impacts on the effectiveness of sexuality education lessons. The more

familiar they become with the socio-cultural theory, the more practical pedagogies can be developed that will be beneficial and meet the needs of students.

I learnt that when teaching sexuality education, I needed to create a learning environment that connected with my students' needs. This reflected in the pedagogical choices that I make while choosing learning activities that promoted participation from students and making connections with their lives. It was important to plan my lessons such that it allowed me to ascertain what knowledge they already possess and use it to create learning moments for them. Therefore, this experience has given me insight into using a variety of pedagogies to be able to teach sexuality education confidently and to make use of different activities to prevent the lesson from being uncomfortable and boring. Through my personal history self-study, I learned that I need to move away from my teaching comfort zone using the traditional method, which my teachers used to teach sexuality education, and move towards a more innovative, creative and effective way of teaching sexuality education.

I believe, through this self-study, I have gained an ability to better understand my teaching practice and work towards improving my pedagogical approaches as I teach sexuality education.

### **My methodological learning**

*From the moment I started this self-study journey I had a belief that I would see the light at the end of the tunnel (Personal journal entry, 1 August 2019)*

Engaging in this self-study, I got an opportunity to reflect on my own practice and find ways to improve and become better informed in my practice. "I found myself placed at the centre of my enquiries" (Samaras, 2011, p. 15). I was able to gain an understanding, that with self-study, I can reflect and ask questions about my practice. Self-study has helped me understand and learn about my teaching practice with the aim of improving it. Through the process of undertaking a self-study methodology, I learnt that this method was suitable and appropriate for me who required improvement and saw a need for change in my classroom teaching practice. Self-study has helped and motivated me in changing the way I taught sexuality education. Through self-study I have gained the confidence to change my practice for the betterment of myself and my students. I gained an understanding that with self-study teachers can reflect and ask questions on their practice. These questions can lead to improvement within their practices just as I have done.

This self-study has given me the ability and knowledge to better understand my teaching practices and improve on my pedagogical approach in teaching sexuality education. Therefore, this self-study journey has contributed towards change in my classroom practice, from my normal teaching methods to an improved teaching approach.

Self-study allowed me to connect at a different level with what I was prescribed to teach. I was able to bridge the gap between what I had to teach and what resulted as effective teaching and learning for both my students and I.

One important key area in my self-study was the help and support I received from my critical friends. My critical friends played an essential role in making contributions to the study as stated by Samaras (2011, p. 44) that “critical friends are an important aspect in the study,” because critical friends who share different perspectives, improves the self-study process. Hence, I learned that support is available, what one has to do is connect with those that have the potential to provide it. Once engaged in that relationship, one needs to continue to be open to new learnings from others.

Through memory-work that came from writing my personal history, I revisited my past sexuality educational experiences of how I was taught sexuality education. I was able to make connections between my current teaching and how I was taught. I came to realise the great influence those experiences have had in my teaching. Through the learnings that emerged, I was able to channel that understanding to thinking about innovative ways of teaching.

### **Moving forward**

In moving forward with the improved teaching of sexuality education in my class I would consider my learnings from chapter three. These learnings have addressed my third research question *what can I learn from my teaching experiences to improve my teaching practice of the Life Orientation curriculum?* These included *Acknowledging cultural practices, establishing positive relationships with students, learning through games, learning through role-play and learning using art in the lesson.* In my future teaching of sexuality content, I intend to grow and strengthen the new strategies employed in this study. I have come to understand that teaching sexuality content needs a collaborative process of engagement with students. That implies the use of teaching strategies that would provide those opportunities. There is valuable input that can be drawn from the students, to facilitate effective and productive learning for all.

Self-study has taught me that as a teacher or lecturer, there is a need for constant and consistent reflection. Working with students that represents a range of ages in a class, this become important, as I need to continuously ask myself, am I still relevant in my teaching for all? Is my teaching a tick a box process or is actual teaching and learning taking place? This will have to reflect in my lesson plans as I ensure that each lesson plan accommodates for students who come into the classroom from different backgrounds. I learnt that teaching sexuality through games is an element that can be used to make lessons fun and enjoyable.

In moving forward with sexuality education teaching, I would like to conduct further research in the TVET sector in identifying lecturers' experiences and perceptions on sexuality education. I also wish to take a collaborative journey with my colleagues, as this will allow me to involve more of my colleagues as we engage ourselves in effective processes of teaching sexuality education, through effective strategies.

### **Conclusion**

Through this self-study journey, I have learned that in the teaching process of sexuality education, there are factors that impede my performance as a lecturer, so that is why I can never be perfect in the classroom when I teach sexuality education, but I can aim to do my best, to ensure my students feel comfortable during my lessons. Therefore, my journey in sexuality education does not stop here because self-improvement is a never-ending journey. I will continue to make a difference in the lives of my students and in my profession.

## List of references

- Allen, L. 2009. "It's not who they are it's what they are like": Re-conceptualising sexuality educations' 'best educator'. *Sexuality Education*, 9(1), 33-49.
- Allender, J. S. & Manke, M. P. 2004. Evoking self in self-study: The analysis of artifacts. In: Tidwell, D. L., Fitzgerald, L. M. & Heston, M. L., eds. Proceedings of the fifth international conference on self-study of teacher education practices (June 27 - July 1), 2004 Herstmonceux Castle, East Sussex, England. Cedar Falls, Iowa: University of Northern Iowa.
- Appalsamy, S. 2015. Educators experiences of teaching sexuality education in the F.E.T. phase. Unpublished Master's Thesis. Durban: University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- Austin, T. & Senese, J. C. 2004. Self-study in school teaching: Teachers' perspectives. In: Loughran, J. J., Hamilton, M. L., LaBoskey, V. K. & Russell, T. (eds.) *International Handbook of Self-study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Barr, J. J. 2016. Developing a Positive Classroom Climate (IDEA Paper #61). *Communication Research Reports*. IDEA Centre.
- Berry, A. & Russell, T. 2016. Self-study and vulnerability. *Studying Teacher Education*, 12(2), 115-116.
- Beyers, C. 2011. Sexuality education in South Africa: a sociocultural perspective. *Acta Academica*, 43 (3), 192-209.
- Beyers, C. 2012. Picture that: Supporting sexuality educators in narrowing the knowledge/practice gap. *South African Journal of Education*, 32(4), 368-380.
- Bhana, D. 2018. *Sex Education, Sexuality, Society and Learning*, New York: Taylor and Francis.
- Bhowmik, M., Banerjee, B. & Banerjee, J. 2013. Role of Pedagogy in Effective Teaching. *Basic Research Journal of Education Research and Review*, 2(1), 1-5.
- Brame, J. C. 2016. Effective Educational Videos: Principles and Guidelines for Maximizing Student Learning from Video Content. *CBE Life Science Education*, 15(4).
- Braun, V. & Clark, V. 2006. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Brogden, L. M. 2008. art-I/f/act-ology: Curricular Artifacts in Auto-ethnographic Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 14(6), 851-864.
- Bullough, R. V. 1994. Personal History and Teaching Metaphors: A Self Study of Teaching as Conversation. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 21(1), 107-120.
- Burns, D. 2007. *Systemic action research: a strategy for whole system change*, Bristol, U.K.: Policy Press.

- Butler-Kisber, L. 2008. Collage as Inquiry. *In: Knowles, G. J. & Cole, A. L. (eds.) Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Butler-Kisber, L. & Poldma, T. 2010. The power of visual approaches in qualitative inquiry: The use of collage making and concept mapping in experiential research. *Journal of Research Practice*, 6(2), 1-17.
- Cochrane-Smith, M. & Lytle, S. 1993. *Inside outside: Teacher research and knowledge*, New York: Teachers College Press.
- Coholic, D., Eys, M. & Lougheed, S. 2012. Investigating the effectiveness of an arts-based and mindfulness-based group program for the improvement of resilience in children in need. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 21(5), 833-844.
- Cole, A. L. 2011. Object-memory, embodiment, and teacher formation: A methodological exploration. . *In: Mitchell, C., Strong-Wilson, T., Pithouse, K. & Allnutt, S. (eds.). Memory and Pedagogy*. New York: Routledge.
- Cooper, J. 1990. Cooperative learning and college teaching: tips from the trenches. *Teaching Professor*, 4(5), 1-2.
- Costa, A. L. & Kallick, B. 1993. Through the Lens of a Critical Friend. *Educational leadership: Journal of the Department of Supervision and Curriculum Development N.E.A*, 51(2), 49-51.
- Cresswell, J. W. 2007. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among five approaches*. 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Department of Basic Education. 2011. Strategic Plans and Budget Review Pretoria: Government Press.
- Department of Higher Education and Training, (2013). NCV subject guidelines Life Orientation Level 2: Pretoria: Government Press.
- Ewans, W. 2000. Teaching using discussion. *In: Neff, R. A. & Weimer, M. (eds.) Classroom Communication: Collected Readings for Effective Discussion and Questioning*. Madison WI: Atwood Publishing.
- Feldman, A. 2003. Validity and quality in self-study. *Educational Researcher*, 32(3), 26-28.
- Francis, D. 2010. Sexuality education in South Africa: Three essential questions. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 30 (2010), 314-319.
- Gerhard, G. & Mayer-Smith, J. 2008. Casting a Wider Net: Deepening Scholarship by Changing Theories. *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 2(1), 1-11.
- Gestenblatt, P. 2013. Collage Portraits as a Method of Analysis in Qualitative Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 12(1). 294-309.
- Grossman, J. M., Jenkins, L. J. & Richer, A. M. 2018. Parents' Perspectives on Family Sexuality Communication from Middle School to High School. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 15(1), 107.

- Hamilton, M. L., Smith, L. & Worthington, K. 2008. Fitting the Methodology with the Research: An exploration of narrative, self-study and auto-ethnography. *Studying Teacher Education*, 4(1), 17-28.
- Harro, B. 2008. *Cycle of Socialization*. New York: Routledge.
- Haruna, H. Hu, X. Chu, S.K. W. (2018). Adolescent School-Based Sexual Health Education and Training: A Literature Review on Teaching and Learning Strategies, 10(3), 172-183
- Hussain, N. et al 2013. Positive Teacher-Student Relationship and Teachers Experience-A Teacher's Perspective. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research Interdisciplinary*, 13(3), Version 1.0
- Jarvis, L., Odell, K. & Troiano, M. 2002. Role-playing as a teaching strategy. *Strategies for Application and Presentation. Staff Development and Presentation*. Available from: <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.550.2518&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- John-Steiner, V. & Mahn, H. 1996. Sociocultural approaches to learning and development: A Vygotskian framework. *Educational Psychologist*, 31 (3-4), 191-206.
- Kelly, P. (2006). What is teacher learning? A socio-cultural perspective. *Oxford Review of Education*, 32(4), 495-500.
- Khau, M. 2012. Sexuality education in rural Lesotho schools: challenges and possibilities. *Sex Education*, 12(4), 411-423.
- Kincheloe, J. L. 2005. *Classroom Teaching*, New York, Peter Lang.
- Klem, A. L. & Connell, J. P. 2004. Relationships Matter: Linking Teacher Support to Student Engagement and Achievement. *Journal of School Health*, 74(7), 262-273.
- Laal, M. & Laal, M. 2012. Collaborative learning: What is it? *Procedia-Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 31(2012), 491-495.
- Laboskey, V. K. 2004. The methodology of self-study and its theoretical underpinnings. . In: Loughran, J. J., Hamilton, M. L., Laboskey, V. K. & Russell, T. (eds.) *International Handbook of Self-study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Lahman, M. K. .E. et al. 2009. Poking Around Poetically: Research, Poetry, and Trustworthiness. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16 (1), 39-48.
- Leung, H., Shek, D. T. L., Leung, E. & Shek, E. Y. W. 2019. Development of Contextually-relevant Sexuality Education: Lessons from a Comprehensive Review of Adolescent Sexuality Education Across Cultures. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(4), 621.
- Madondo, S. B. 2014. Nurturing learners' flair for written communication: A Teacher's self –study. Unpublished Master's Thesis: University of KwaZulu-Natal: Durban.
- Magubane, S. E. 2014. Cultivating intrinsic motivation for learning technology. Unpublished Master's Thesis. University of KwaZulu-Natal: Durban.

- Malfetti, A. L. & Rubin, A. L. 1968. The family coordinator. Sex education who is teaching the teacher: Programme proposals for teacher education. Pretoria: Government Press.
- Masinga, L. R. 2007. How can I effectively integrate sexuality education in my teaching practice in a grade 6 class? A Teacher's self-study. Unpublished Master's Thesis: University of KwaZulu-Natal: Durban.
- Masinga, L. R. 2009. An African teacher's journey to self-knowledge through teaching sexuality education. *In: Pithouse, K., Mitchell, C. & Moletsane, R. (eds.) Making connections: Self-study & Social Action.* New York: Peter Lang.
- Masinga, L. R. 2012. Journeys to self-knowledge: Methodological reflections on using memory-work in a participatory study of teachers as sexuality educators. *Journal of Education*, 54, 121-137.
- Masinga, L. R. 2013. Journeys to self-knowledge: A participatory study of teachers as sexuality educator. Unpublished Ph D Thesis: University of KwaZulu-Natal: Durban.
- Moletsane, R. 2011. Culture, nostalgia, and sexuality education in the age of AIDS in South Africa. . *In: Mitchell, C., Strong-Wilson, T., Pithouse, K. & Allnutt, S. (eds.) Memory and Pedagogy.* New York: Routledge.
- Munby, H. & Russell, T. 1990. Metaphor in the study of teachers' professional knowledge. *Theory into Practice*, 29(2), 116-121.
- Murphy, M. & Ribarsky, E. 2013. *Activities for Teaching Gender and Sexuality in the University Classroom.* UK, Rowman and Littlefield Education.
- Ndaleneni, T. 2013. Teaching English oral communication to IsiZulu-speaking learners in a secondary school: A self-study. Unpublished Master's Thesis: University of KwaZulu-Natal: Durban.
- Nieuwenhuis, J. 2016b. Introducing qualitative research. *In: K., M. (ed.) First steps in research.* Pretoria: South Africa: Van Schaik.
- Norvig, P. 21 June 2012. The 100 000 student classroom. *Ted Talks.* Tedx. Available from: [http://www.ted.com/talks/peter\\_norvig\\_the\\_100\\_000\\_student\\_classroom?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/peter_norvig_the_100_000_student_classroom?language=en)
- Papathandsiou, I., Lahana, E. (2007). Adolescence, sexuality and sexual education. *Health Science Journal*, (1), 1-8.
- Parry, O. & Mauthner, N. S. 2004. Whose data are they anyway? Practical, legal and ethical issues in archiving qualitative research data. *Sociology*, 38(1), 139-152.
- Pinnegar, S. & Hamilton, M. L. 2009. *Self-study of Practice as Genre of Qualitative Research: Theory, Methodology, and Practice.* Dordrecht: Springer.
- Pithouse, K. 2011. Picturing the self: Drawing as a method for self-study. *In: Theron, L., Mitchell, C. & Stuart, J. (eds.) Picturing research: Drawings as visual methodology.* Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

- Pithouse, K., Mitchell, C. & Weber, S. 2009. Self-study in teaching and teacher development: a call to action. *Educational Action Research -Connecting Research and Practice for Professionals and Communities* 17(1), 43-62.
- Pithouse-Morgan, K. & Samaras, A. P. 2015. The power of "we" for polyvocal learning. In: Pithouse-Morgan, K. & Samaras, A. P. (eds.) *Polyvocal Professional Learning through Self-Study Research* Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Pithouse-Morgan, K. et al. 2014. Entering an ambiguous space: Evoking polyvocality in educational research through collective poetic inquiry. *Perspectives in Education*, 32(4), 149-170.
- Rager, K. B. 2005. Self-care and the qualitative researcher: When collecting data can break your heart. *Educational Researcher*, 34 (4), 23-27.
- Raht, D., Smith, J. & MacEntee, K. 2009. Engaging youth in addressing HIV & AIDS: Creative and participatory methods in the classroom. In: Mitchell, C. & Pithouse, K. (eds.) *Teaching and HIV & AIDS*. Johannesburg: MacMillan.
- Rantala, T. & Määttä, K. 2012. Ten theses of the joy of learning at primary schools. *Early Child Development and Care*, 182(1), 87-105.
- Roffey, S. 2012. Developing Positive Relationships in School: Evidence Based Practice across the World. In: Roffey, S. (ed.) *Positive Relationships*. Netherlands: Springer.
- Samaras, A. P. 2011. *Self-study teacher research: Improving your practice through collaborative inquiry*, Thousand Oaks: CA, Sage Publications.
- Samaras, A. P. & Freese, A. R. 2006. *Self-study of teaching practices primer*, New York, Peter Lang.
- Samaras, A. P., Hicks, M. A. & Berger, J. G. 2004. Self-study through personal history. In: Loughran, J. J., Hamilton, M. L., LaBoskey, V. K. & Russell, T. (eds.) *International Handbook of Self-study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices* Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Samaras, A. P. & Roberts, L. 2011. Flying Solo: Teachers Take Charge of Their Learning through Self-Study Research. *Learning Forward. Journal of Staff Development*, 32(5), 42-45.
- Sanjakdar, F. et al. 2015. In search of critical pedagogy in Sexuality Education: Visions, Imaginations, and Paradoxes. *The Review of Education, Pedagogy and Cultural Studies*, 37(1), 53-70.
- Schulte, A. (n.d.). Self-study PPT. Available from: <https://studylib.net/doc/9973898/self-study>)
- Simmons, N. & Daly, S. 2013. The Art of Thinking: Using Collage to Stimulate Scholarly Work *The Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 4(1),1-11.
- Sule, H. A. 2015. Impact of sex education *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6 (3), 34-41.
- Swanepoel, A. E. & Beyers, C. 2019. Investigating sexuality education in South African schools: A matter of space, place and culture. *The journal for transdisciplinary research in Southern Africa*, 15 (1), 1-9.

- Taylor, M., Dlamini, N., Khanyile, Z. & Mpanza, L. 2012. Exploring the use of role-play in a school-based programme to reduce teenage pregnancy *South African Journal of Education*, 32 (4), 441-448.
- Torralba, A. N., Trinos-Gutierrez, C. D. L. & Tan-Garcia, L. 2013. *Sexuality education 101: Education in love, sex and life.* , Makati City: Global Creative Publishing House Corporation.
- UNESCO 2015. Emerging evidence, lessons and practice in comprehensive sexuality education. A global review. UNESCO
- Van Deventer, K. 2008. Perceptions of Life Orientation teachers' regarding the implementation of the learning area in grades 8 and 9: A survey in selected Western 127 Cape High Schools. . *South African Journal for Research in Sport, Physical Education and Recreation*, 30 (2), 131-146.
- Vaughan, K. 2005. Pierced together: Collage as an artist's method for interdisciplinary research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 4(1), 1-21.
- Woolfolk, A. 2010. *Educational Psychology*, New Jersey: Pearsons.
- Zhang, D., Zhou, L., Briggs, R. O. & Nunamaker, J. F. 2006. Interactive video in an e-learning system allows proactive and random ... Instructional video in e-learning: Assessing the impact of interactive video on learning effectiveness. *Information & Management* 43(2006), 15-27.
- Zisser, A. & Francis, D. 2006. Youth have a new attitude on HIV/AIDS, but what are they talking about? *African Journal of Aids Research*, 5(2), 189-196.

## Appendix A – Ethical Clearance Certificate



5 October 2018

Ms Melissa Moses 208525603  
School of Education  
Edgewood Campus

Dear Ms Moses

Protocol reference number: HSS/12.15/018M

Project title: Improving my pedagogical approach in teaching sexuality education at a TVET College: A teachers self-study.

### Full Approval – Full Committee Reviewed Protocol

In response to your application received 16 August 2018, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

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 discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you every/ing of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully



Professor Shenuka Singh (Chair)  
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

cc Supervisor: Dr Lungile Masinga  
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr Simon Khoza  
cc School Administrators: Ms M Ngcobo, Mrs S Jcenarain and Mr SM Mthembu

### Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X04031, Durban 4001

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 090/03504657 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4809 Email: [smban@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:smban@ukzn.ac.za) / [ymw@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:ymw@ukzn.ac.za) / [ethics@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:ethics@ukzn.ac.za)

Website: [www.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.ukzn.ac.za)



100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Pietermaritzburg Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville



**EDITING CERTIFICATE**

**CONTACT**

---

Dr Anita Hiralaal  
BA, HDE, B ED HONS, B COMM HONS, M ED, PH D  
17 Fairfield Avenue  
Scottsville  
Pietermaritzburg  
Email: anitah@dut.ac.za  
Telephone: 0333864913  
0825352777

**AUTHOR: MS MELISSA MOSES**

---

**14 JANUARY 2021**

**Master's Thesis**

**IMPROVING MY PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH TO  
TEACHING SEXUALITY EDUCATION AT A  
TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION  
AND TRAINING COLLEGE  
A TEACHER'S SELF STUDY**

been edited to ensure technically accurate and  
contextually appropriate use of language, grammar,  
logical coherency and presentation.



Dr Anita Hiralaal

---

**Banking details**

Nedbank Scottsville  
Branch Code: 134125  
Account Holder: A Hiralaal  
Acc No: 1341040526

## Appendix C – Turn it in report

### M. Ed Dissertation

---

#### ORIGINALITY REPORT

---

6%

SIMILARITY INDEX

5%

INTERNET SOURCES

2%

PUBLICATIONS

%

STUDENT PAPERS

---

#### PRIMARY SOURCES

---

1

[researchspace.ukzn.ac.za](http://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za)

Internet Source

2%

2

[youthworkireland.ie](http://youthworkireland.ie)

Internet Source

1%

3

[www.umalusi.org.za](http://www.umalusi.org.za)

Internet Source

<1%

4

[pdfs.semanticscholar.org](http://pdfs.semanticscholar.org)

Internet Source

<1%

5

[mafiadoc.com](http://mafiadoc.com)

Internet Source

<1%

---

6	<p>"International Handbook of Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2020 Publication</p>	<1%
7	<p>146.230.128.141 Internet Source</p>	<1%
8	<p>unesdoc.unesco.org Internet Source</p>	<1%
9	<p>www.scielo.org.za Internet Source</p>	<1%
10	<p>link.springer.com Internet Source</p>	<1%
11	<p>www.scribd.com Internet Source</p>	<1%
12	<p>artemiseetmoi.be Internet Source</p>	<1%

---

13

[www.ajol.info](http://www.ajol.info)

Internet Source

<1%

---

14

Paula Gerstenblatt. "Collage Portraits as a Method of Analysis in Qualitative Research", International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 2013

Publication

<1%

---

15

[www.saamar.com](http://www.saamar.com)

Internet Source

<1%

---

16

[journal.iain-samarinda.ac.id](http://journal.iain-samarinda.ac.id)

Internet Source

<1%

---

17

[www.eastdurham.ac.uk](http://www.eastdurham.ac.uk)

Internet Source

<1%

---

18

[www.saide.org.za](http://www.saide.org.za)

Internet Source

<1%

---

Dennis A. Francis. "What does the teaching and learning of sexuality education in South African

19

schools reveal about counter-normative sexualities?", Sex Education, 2018

Publication

<1%

20

Sisa Ngabaza, Tamara Shefer, Ida Macleod

Catriona. "“Girls need to behave like girls you know”: the complexities of applying a gender justice goal within sexuality education in South African schools", Reproductive Health Matters, 2016

Publication

<1%

21

[www.tandfonline.com](http://www.tandfonline.com)

Internet Source

<1%

22

Sabrina D. MisirHiralall. "Confronting

Orientalism", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2017

Publication

<1%

Dennis A. Francis. "Troubling the Teaching and Learning of Gender and Sexuality Diversity in South African Education", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2017

Publication

<1%

---

ASTE Series in Science Education, 2016. **24**  
Publication

<1%

---

**25** [hdl.handle.net](http://hdl.handle.net)  
Internet Source

<1%

---

**26** [scholarworks.waldenu.edu](http://scholarworks.waldenu.edu)  
Internet Source

<1%

---

**27** [digitalcommons.unl.edu](http://digitalcommons.unl.edu)  
Internet Source

<1%

---

**28** [theses.gla.ac.uk](http://theses.gla.ac.uk)  
Internet Source

<1%

---

**29** [kicd.ac.ke](http://kicd.ac.ke)  
Internet Source

<1%

---

**30** [theses.ucalgary.ca](http://theses.ucalgary.ca)  
Internet Source

<1%

---

31

Marcella Tarozzi Goldsmith. "Chapter 8

Leopardi's Nocturnal Muse", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2012

Publication

<1%

33

[arcabc.ca](http://arcabc.ca)

Internet Source

<1%

34

[www.tut.ac.za](http://www.tut.ac.za)

Internet Source

<1%

35

[www.aylesburyclinic.ie](http://www.aylesburyclinic.ie)

Internet Source

<1%

36

[www.researchgate.net](http://www.researchgate.net)

Internet Source

<1%

---

37

[www.collectionscanada.gc.ca](http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca)

Internet Source

<1%

---

38

Mary Lynn Hamilton. "Fitting the Methodology with the Research: An exploration of narrative, self-study and auto-ethnography", *Studying Teacher Education*, 5/2008

Publication

<1%

---

39

[bura.brunel.ac.uk](http://bura.brunel.ac.uk)

Internet Source

<1%

---

40

[article.sciencepublishinggroup.com](http://article.sciencepublishinggroup.com)

Internet Source

<1%

---

Exclude quotes      On

Exclude matches      < 10 words

Exclude bibliography      On

## Appendix D – Letter to the Campus Manager

63 Executive Drive  
Orient Heights  
Pietermaritzburg  
19 July 2018

Mr R S Roy  
Campus Manager  
UMgungundlovu TVET College  
Edendale Campus

### REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

*Title of study: Improving my pedagogical approach in teaching sexuality education at a TVET College: A teachers self-study*

The focus in this study is to explore how, I as a Life Orientation (LO) Lecturer can improve on the way I currently teach the sexuality component in the LO curriculum which is part of the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) programme.

I am a student the University Of Natal (UKZN) and this research form part of my Master in Education (M.ED) study. The findings of my study will be used in my M.ED thesis and any related publication and presentations. This study is supervised by Dr Lungile Masinga who is a Lecturer at the school of education in UKZN. Dr Lungile Masinga can be contacted via email: [Masingal@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Masingal@ukzn.ac.za).

In this study I will be the principal participant. I will use my daily teaching activities to gather information from level 2 learners. I will use reflective journals, collage making and the blog as data generation strategies. If I gain informed consent from participants' I will use this data in a way that respects their dignity and privacy. Copies of their contributions will be securely stored and disposed of if no longer required for research purposes. Their names or any information that might identify them or the school will not be used in any presentation or publication that might come out of the study. They will be informed that they have no binding commitment to the study and may withdraw their consent; they will not be prejudiced in any way. There are no direct benefits to participants from participating in the study. However, I hope that this study will make significant contribution to my professional development. If you have any question relating to the rights of research participants, you can contact Ms Phume Ximba in the University of KwaZulu-Natal Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Office on 031-260 3587. I here-by request a letter of permission from you to conduct this research at Campus.

Thank you for your assistance  
Yours Sincerely

Ms M Moses

## Appendix E – Letter to the Manager in the office of the Principle

63 Executive Drive  
Orient Heights  
Pietermaritzburg  
15 MAY 2018

Mr LS Ramatema  
Manager in the Office of the Principal  
Umgungundlovu TVET College  
Pietermaritzburg

### REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

*Title of study: Improving my pedagogical approach in teaching sexuality education at a TVET College: A teachers self-study*

The focus in this study is to explore how, I as a Life Orientation (LO) Lecturer can improve on the way I currently teach the sexuality component in the LO curriculum which is part of the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) programme.

I am a student the University Of Natal (UKZN) and this research form part of my Master in Education (M.ED) study. The findings of my study will be used in my M.ED thesis and any related publication and presentations. This study is supervised by Dr Lungile Masinga who is a Lecturer at the school of education in UKZN. Dr Lungile Masinga can be contacted via email: [Masingal@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Masingal@ukzn.ac.za).

In this study I will be the principal participant. I will use my daily teaching activities to gather information from level 2 learners. I will use reflective journals, collage making and the blog as data generation strategies. If I gain informed consent from participants' I will use this data in a way that respects their dignity and privacy. Copies of their contributions will be securely stored and disposed of if no longer required for research purposes. Their names or any information that might identify them or the school will not be used in any presentation or publication that might come out of the study. They will be informed that they have no binding commitment to the study and may withdraw their consent; they will not be prejudiced in any way. There are no direct benefits to participants from participating in the study. However, I hope that this study will make significant contribution to my professional development. If you have any question relating to the rights of research participants, you can contact Ms Phume Ximba in the University of KwaZulu-Natal Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Office on 031-260 3587. I here-by request a letter of permission from you to conduct this research at Campus.

Thank you for your assistance  
Yours Sincerely

Ms M Moses

## Appendix F – Letter to critical friend

63 Executive Drive  
Orient Heights  
Pietermaritzburg

Dear Critical Friend

### **REQUEST FOR CONSENT TO USE FINDINGS FROM DISCUSSIONS IN CRITICAL FRIENDS MEETING**

*Title of study: Improving my pedagogical approach in teaching sexuality education at Umgungundlovu TVET College: A teachers self-study*

The focus in this study is to explore how, I as a Life Orientation (LO) Lecturer can improve on the way I currently teach the sexuality component in the LO curriculum which is part of the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) programme.

I am a student the University Of Natal (UKZN) and this research form part of my Master in Education (M.ED) study. The finding of my study will be used in my M.ED thesis and any related publication and presentations. This study is supervised by Dr Lungile Masinga who is a Lecturer at the school of education in UKZN. Dr Lungile Masinga can be contacted via email: [Masingal@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Masingal@ukzn.ac.za).

In this study, I will use the following method to gather information: group discussions with critical friends. The critical friends meetings will take place twice a week during lunch. I will therefore not require any additional time with you. I will take notes during the discussions. I hereby request permission from you to refer to our discussions of our critical friend's meetings in my study. I will only use this data if I receive written consent from you. If I receive your consent, I will use this data in a way that respects your dignity and privacy. My notes on your inputs to the discussion will be securely stored and disposed of if no longer required for research purposes.

Your name or any information that might identify you or your school will not be used in my presentation or publication that might come out of the study. There are no direct benefits to participants. Your names or any information that might identify you will not be used in any presentation or if you have any question relating to the rights of research participants, you can contact Ms Phume Ximba in the University of KwaZulu-Natal Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Office on 031-260 3587. I here-by request a letter of permission from you to conduct this research at Campus.

Thank you for your assistance  
Yours Sincerely

Ms M Moses

## Appendix G – Letter to student

63 Executive Drive  
Orient Heights  
Pietermaritzburg

19 July 2018

Dear Student

### **REQUEST FOR CONSENT TO USE FINDINGS FROM YOUR CONTRIBUTION IN THE LIFE ORIENTATION LESSONS.**

Title of the study: *Improving my pedagogical approach in teaching sexuality education at a TVET College: A teachers self-study*

The focus in this study is to explore how, I as a Life Orientation (LO) Lecturer can improve on the way I currently teach the sexuality component in the LO curriculum which is part of the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) programme.

I am a student the University Of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN) and this research form part of my Master in Education (M.ED) study. The findings of my study will be used in my M.ED thesis and any related publication and presentations. This study is supervised by Dr Lungile Masinga who is a Lecturer at the school of education in UKZN. Dr Lungile Masinga can be contacted via email: [Masinal@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Masinal@ukzn.ac.za).

In this study I will be the principal participant. I will use my daily teaching activities to gather information from level 2 learners. I will use reflective journals, collage making and the blog as data generation strategies. If I gain informed consent from you as my participants' I will use your data in a way that respects your dignity and privacy. Copies of your contributions will be securely stored and disposed of if no longer required for research purposes. Your names or any information that might identify you or the College will not be used in any presentation or publication that might come out of the study. You will have no binding commitment to the study and may withdraw your consent; you will not be prejudiced in any way. There are no direct benefits to participants from participating in the study. However, I hope that this study will make significant contribution to my professional development. If you have any question relating to the rights of research participants, you can contact Ms Phume Ximba in the University of KwaZulu-Natal Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Office on 031-260 3587.

Thank you for your assistance

Yours Sincerely  
Ms M Moses

## Appendix H – Lesson Plan 1

<b>Learning Area: Life Orientation</b>	Level: 2	Duration: 2 hours
<b>Content:</b> sexuality education	<b>Aims/objectives and learning outcomes:</b> By the end of this lesson students will be able to:  Describe the biological and physiological difference between females and males.	
<b>Lesson topic:</b> Topic 3 (Health and wellbeing)		
<b>Part 1: Minds on</b>		
<b>Questions to ask</b>	<b>Learning activities (including content/process/product)</b>	<b>Materials and resources</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What words make you feel uncomfortable?</li> <li>2. What words makes you feel comfortable and you can speak about.</li> </ol>	<p>I will begin the lesson by having an image of the male body parts and female body parts on the desk. Students will be seated in groups of five. Each group will have 2 colour pens. Students will be required to circle names which they feel comfortable with one colour and circle names that they do not feel comfortable with, with another colour.</p> <p>Students will be tasked to rename the words that they do not feel comfortable with. This will lead to aspects that will bring about their culture and what was taught in their upbringing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Image of a male and female</li> <li>• 10 colour pens</li> </ul>
<b>Part 2: Action</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do you like yourself?</li> </ol>	Students will be given a group activity. Each group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five typed out A3 worksheets with body parts and characteristics.</li> </ul>

<p>2. Is there anything you wish to change about your physical appearance?</p>	<p>will consist of 5 students. The group will be given an A3 cardboard and a worksheet that includes the different characteristics and parts of males and females. On the cardboard students will be instructed to draw three lines in order to divide the cardboard into 3 columns. The column headings must read as males, females, both and other. Students will then be tasked to cut out each characteristic and parts and paste it in the respective column. On the completion of the group activity class discussion will commence on the biological and physiological differences of males and females. Where students feel uncomfortable of a particular name, the rename will be used instead. The discussion will also focus around issues such as heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual and so on. I will indicate to students how the first activity now connects to the second activity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 pairs of scissors</li> <li>• 5 A4 cardboard</li> <li>• 5 glue stick</li> <li>• 5 Pencils</li> <li>• 5 Rulers</li>   <li>• You tube videos</li> <li>• Magazines</li> <li>• Newspapers</li> <li>• 25 A4 pages</li> <li>• 25 pen</li> </ul>
--	---	---

	<p>For the next activity students will watch a you tube video on what boys and girls say about their appearances and whether or not they are satisfied with the way they look.</p>	
	<p>Thereafter, students will take out the magazines and newspapers which I requested to them the previous day to bring in for the lesson. I will have some magazines on standby. Students will therefore be required to scan through these resources and find two pictures. One picture must represent what they want to be like and the other picture what they would not want to look like. Students will be tasked to indicate as a footnote why they want to look that way or not.</p>	
<p><b>Part 3: Consolidate , Debrief</b></p>		
<p>1. Was the topic interesting? 2. What did you learn in today’s lesson?</p>	<p>Students will be given time to reflect and write down three key concepts of the lesson. Then share your concepts with your neighbour.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whiteboard</li> <li>• Whiteboard markers</li> <li>• Pages</li> <li>• Pen</li> </ul>
<p><b>Assessment activities (diagnostic/formative/summative)</b></p>		

**1. Individual Work:**

At the end of the semester students will be given a summative assessment which is in form of a final examination.

**How will the next lesson build on this one?**

The next lesson speaks about gender roles and responsibilities and behavior within relationships. In order for students to understand gender roles the knowledge of this lesson is essential.