The Read-me-to-Resilience intervention: An exemplar of the resilience-promoting value of providing Educators-as-lay-counsellors with ready-made interventions

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DECLARATION

I Carmen Joubert hereby declare that this thesis is my own work. This thesis is submitted for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor in Educational Psychology at the North-West University (Vaal Triangle Campus, Vanderbijlpark). The information within this thesis has not been used for any other degree or assessment. The information acknowledges the sources used.

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LETTER FROM THE LANGUAGE EDITOR

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<u>To Whom It May Concern</u>

This is to confirm that I am a professional copy-editor with 12 years of experience of editing academic-type material for local and international organisations. I was also a professor of English at the University of Johannesburg.

I have edited to the best of my ability Ms Carmen Joubert's doctoral thesis entitled "The Read-me-to-Resilience intervention: An exemplar of the resilience-promoting value of providing Educators-as-lay-counsellors with ready-made interventions".

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ABSTRACT

The study reported in this thesis explores the experiences of Educators-As-Lay-Counsellors (EALCs) of the Read-me-to-Resilience (Rm2R) intervention strategy with black South African orphans in order to theorise about the value of providing EALCs with a ready-made intervention tool in the interest of supporting their resilience. EALCs are educators who are assigned the role of pastoral carer or are voluntarily fulfilling this role. Most educators who fulfil lay counselling roles are not formally equipped to be skilled helpers. Not only are educators in general poorly trained to cope with the social and emotional needs of orphaned and other vulnerable children, but working as an EALC has additional challenges. One possible way of supporting EALCs to be resilient in the face of the challenges endemic to being a lay counsellor in South Africa in the 21st century is to support EALC access to counselling tools and resilience-supporting interventions. However, existing resilience and other literature does not document how valuable providing EALCs with ready-made counselling tools/intervention programmes might be. Thus, the purpose of this study was to theorise about the value of providing EALCs with ready-made intervention tools. A secondary, but related purpose was to explore EALCs' experiences of the Rm2R intervention strategy as a pathway to resilience for orphaned South African learners and for the EALCs themselves.

To achieve this pupose, 16 South African educators voluntarily implemented the Rm2R (as an example of a ready-made intervention) for 11 weeks with orphaned learners. Its usefulness was investigated using a pre-intervention/post-intervention design and qualitative data generation techniques (the draw-and-write technique, focus group interviews and research diaries).

Participating educators reported that using the Rm2R intervention promoted their positive adjustment to the challenges of lay counselling. This included the development of a positive attitude towards lay counselling roles, and greater counselling competence and cultural awareness. Four resilience-supporting pathways were reported for orphaned learners, including the promotion of life

skills, positive distraction, constructive attachments and an appreciation of cultural resources. Although the Rm2R intervention was useful as a ready-made intervention, refinements were suggested to address frustrations experienced during implementation. These findings allowed theorisation about the usefulness of providing EALCs with ready-made interventions. The study concluded that there is limited value in providing EALCs with a ready-made intervention tool in the interest of supporting EALC resilience.

Keywords: educator, lay counsellor, bibliotherapy, resilience, orphan

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER FIVE

CHAPTER SIX

CHAPTER SEVEN

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

```
┌─────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────┐
│      1.1        │ ──→ │      1.2        │ ──→ │      1.3        │
│  INTRODUCTION   │     │  BACKGROUND OF  │     │    PURPOSE      │
│  AND RATIONALE  │     │  THE RM2R STUDY │     │   STATEMENT     │
└─────────────────┘     └─────────────────┘     └─────────────────┘
                                                          │
                                                          ↓
┌─────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────┐
│      1.4        │     │      1.5        │     │      1.6        │
│    RESEARCH     │ ──→ │ THEORETICAL AND │ ──→ │    RESEARCH     │
│    QUESTIONS    │     │   CONCEPTUAL    │     │   METHODOLOGY   │
│                 │     │    FRAMEWORK    │     │                 │
└─────────────────┘     └─────────────────┘     └─────────────────┘
        │                                                 │
        ↓                                                 ↓
┌─────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────┐
│      1.7        │     │      1.8        │     │                 │
│    ETHICAL      │ ──→ │ STATING THE     │ ──→ │      1.9        │
│   PROCEDURE     │     │ LIMITATIONS OF  │     │ CHAPTER DIVISION│
│                 │     │   MY STUDY      │     │                 │
│                 │     │   UPFRONT       │     │                 │
└─────────────────┘     └─────────────────┘     └─────────────────┘
        │
        ↓
┌─────────────────┐
│      1.10       │
│   CONCLUSION    │
│                 │
└─────────────────┘
```

Figure 1.1 Overview of Chapter One

1.1   INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

The study reported in this thesis explores the value of the 'Read-me-to-Resilience' (Rm2R) intervention strategy (Theron, 2008a), as an example of a ready-made intervention used by Educators-As-Lay-Counsellors' (EALCs), in order to theorise about the value of providing EALCs with a ready-made intervention tool in the interest of supporting their and South African orphans' resilience. Professionals serving the school system, including registered

therapists, staff from non-governmental organisations and educators, are overworked trying to handle the needs of growing numbers of orphaned and vulnerable learners (Ferreira, Ebersöhn & Odendaal, 2010:101; Khanare, 2012:251; Louw et al., 2009:205; Theron, 2009:231). Each year the number of problematic cases in the school system increases, causing stress that leads to educator burnout and cries for help from parents, children and the community at large (Louw et al., 2009:205). As social crises increase, more and more demands are placed on educators to function as pastoral carers or lay counsellors. Sadly, educators who also fulfil a pastoral role (or EALCs) are seldom trained to cope well with the demands of counselling in South Africa in the 21st century.

As suggested above, EALCs are educators who are assigned the role of pastoral carer or are willingly fulfilling this role. The Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (DoE, 2011) recognise seven collective roles that can be carried out by individual educators if they want to or are asked to by the principal/governing body of the school. One of those roles includes that of pastoral carer. In order to be a competent pastoral carer, the educator will have to develop into a skilled helper, which involves the mastering of several counselling skills (i.e. listening, focusing, questioning, clarifying) (Kotler & Kotler, 2007:2; Nelson-Jones, 2005:19; Van Niekerk & Hay, 2009:214). Skilled helpers are often referred to as lay counsellors or even life coaches, according to Nelson-Jones (2005:19).

Most educators who fulfil lay counselling roles are not formally equipped to be skilled helpers, let alone to respond to diverse learner needs, and so the rising need to provide pastoral care and lay counselling has caused many educators much stress (Theron, 2009:231). Multiple contextual challenges mean that educators are increasingly needing to counsel and support learners (Donald et al., 2004:47; 2010:267; Gibson et al., 2010:30). For example, many EALCs need to support children affected by HIV/AIDS, poverty, divorce and other psychosocial risks (Khanare, 2012:251; Louw et al., 2009:205; Theron, 2009:231; Theron & Engelbrecht, 2012:266). A prominent challenge facing EALCs relates to the increasing numbers of orphaned South African children

and the many social, economic and psychological threats to these children's well-being (hence the focus on orphans in my study).

An orphan is defined as a child who has lost one of his/her parents. A double orphan is a child who has lost both parents (Sherr et al., 2008:527; Skinner et al., 2006:619). In the South African context many orphans lose their parents due to HIV/AIDS (Bicego et al., 2003:1235; Bray, 2003:39; Theron, 2008c:29). In sub-Saharan Africa alone the number of AIDS orphans increased from 8.9 million to 14.8 million between 2001 and 2009 (Skovdal & Daniel, 2012:153; UNAIDS, 2010). Typically, AIDS orphans and other orphans are vulnerable and forgotten. This often results in children who do not have the resources (e.g. finances, support of parents, role models, education) needed to cope with daily life and are in drastic need of support from their educators (among others) towards resilience (Atwine et al., 2005:555). There have been calls for support on a daily basis both for educators who work with orphans and for vulnerable children (Louw et al., 2009:205; Theron, 2009:231; Theron & Engelbrecht, 2012:265) and for orphaned children (Hoadley, 2007:251). However, educators lament that they are poorly prepared to support and/or counsel these children in meaningful ways (Ferreira, Ebersöhn & Odendaal, 2010:101; Mpofu et al., 2011:116).

Not only are educators poorly trained to cope with the social and emotional needs of orphaned and other vulnerable children, but working as an EALC has additional challenges. Educators choosing or being assigned the role of pastoral carer or lay counsellor are overwhelmed by the complexity of the multiple roles that they have to fulfil. Although they are functioning as EALCs, these educators still have to teach, do administrative tasks, and be involved with coaching extra-curriculum activities such as sport and drama while addressing issues such as rape, violence, HIV/AIDS and poverty (Lee, 2005:184). The complexity of these multiple roles often leads to burnout. As in the case of school counselors who experience burnout because of role conflict and who struggle to be resilient under the pressure of role ambiguity (DeLorme, 2010:100; Loveless, 2010:122; Nebe, 2010:27; Windle, 2009:64), my experience is that EALCs report similar risks. Furthermore, EALCs are often under-appreciated if they work in contexts where (even) counsellors receive

little recognition (Du Preez & Roos, 2008:699; Elkonin & Sandison, 2010:95; Pretorius, 2012:509; Van Niekerk & Hay, 2009:160). In summary, EALCs face multiple challenges that place them at risk of non-resilience.

Resilience, or the capacity to cope adaptively with difficult life circumstances (such as orphanhood or poverty), is encouraged by protective resources in the individual and the individual's ecology that together foster the development of positive outcomes (Bonanno, 2004:20–21; Donald et al., 2010:267; Lerner, 2006:40; Rutter, 2005b:221; 2007:205; Schoon, 2007:94; Schoon & Bartley, 2008:24; Schoon & Bynner, 2003:21; 2008:24; Theron, 2008b:215; Ungar, 2008:218; Ungar et al., 2007:287; 2008:1). The abovementioned contextual challenges have the potential to hamper educators' resilience and how they cope with their challenging task as lay counsellors, and in turn hamper the resilience of at-risk learners. Consequently there have been calls to explore ways to support educators to cope with the aforementioned demands and to support them towards greater resilience (Louw et al., 2009:205; Theron, 2009:231), particularly given the many challenges EALCs have to overcome.

One possible way of supporting EALCs to be resilient in the face of the challenges endemic to being a lay counsellor in South Africa in the 21st century is to support their access to counselling tools and resilience-supporting interventions (Ferreira, Ebersöhn & McCallaghan, 2010:199). In the absence of such access to meaningful resources/assets, EALCs could continue to feel unable to support their school/community and probably struggle to be resilient themselves (Ferreira, Ebersöhn & Odendaal, 2010:101; Mpofu et al., 2011:116). Masten et al. (2009:128) endorse "asset-focused strategies: improving [the] number or quality of resources or social capital" as a pathway to resilience. In South Africa, Theron (2008c:29) supported educator resilience by giving groups of HIV/AIDS-affected educators access to a support programme entitled "Resilient Educators". Likewise, Ferreira, Ebersöhn and McCallaghan (2010:199) used their STAR intervention programme to promote awareness of social capital and support the resilience of HIV/AIDS-affected educators. These studies, and the promotion of access to resources as a pathway to resilience, prompted me to wonder how well EALCs might be supported towards resilience if they were provided with a ready-made support programme that they could

4

use in their counselling duties. Would such access support EALCs to feel more competent as counsellors? Would it support their resilience? Would it support the resilience of their learners, and how would this impact the challenges that EALCs experience?

Support alternatives that can be used by EALCs include therapeutic interventions, so long as these do not require professional training or psychological skill given that EALCs fall outside of the scope of practice of registered or professional counsellors (Van Niekerk & Hay, 2009:315). Typically, therapeutic interventions entail various forms of individual and/or group therapy to encourage resilience in distressed individuals (Atwine et al., 2005:555; Bellin & Kovacs, 2006:212–13; Bheamadu, 2004; Christ & Christ, 2006:197; Cluver & Gardner, 2007:318; Coifman et al., 2007:371; Grinstead et al., 2001:1045; Mo Yee et al., 2009:395). Because EALCs often function in resource-poor schools (Cook et al., 2010:456; Van Niekerk & Hay, 2009:400) and because of their limited training, I had to consider economical, straightforward alternatives. An inexpensive therapeutic intervention that is used formally and informally is that of bibliotherapy. This intervention, which entails the reading or telling of stories that teach adaptive behaviours, has been proven by many therapists and researchers to be an effective therapeutic tool to support children/adults experiencing mild to moderate stress, anxiety and depression, as well as to enhance resilience (Brown, 2009:20; Welsh, 2009:30; Winship, 2010:184).

While some studies have explored the experiences of therapists' use of bibliotherapy as a therapeutic technique (Arad, 2004:249; Bergner, 2007:149; Bheamadu, 2004:1; Butler et al., 2009:225), I struggled to find studies that focus on the use of bibliotherapy by lay counsellors, particularly when these lay counsellors are also educators (i.e. EALCs). More than ten years ago a study appeared that focused on using bibliotherapy in the classroom (Mitchell-Kamalie, 2002:1). Later, another study focused on resilience and orphans (Stortz, 2007:1), and still more recently another focused on using bibliotherapy as a tool for improving resilience in orphans (Du Toit, 2010:29). More recently, preliminary studies (Wood et al., 2012b:225) explored the resilience-promoting potential of the 22 stories comprising the Rm2R intervention. Although these

studies suggested that the intervention held resilience-promoting value for orphans and vulnerable children, there was no mention of the potential value for adults (like EALCs) using the intervention to support orphans and vulnerable children. Specifically, I wondered how supportive EALCs would find the Rm2R intervention. What would their experiences teach us (as researchers, academics, and trainers of EALCs) about the value of providing EALCs with ready-made intervention tools in general? Would access to "asset-focused strategies" (Masten et al., 2009:128) support EALCs to cope better with the challenges of inadequate training, work overload, poor recognition and others? What would their experiences indicate about the value of the Rm2R intervention in particular as a pathway to their own/learner support and resilience? Thus, partly because I was part of the Rm2R team (see section 1.2) and partly because I believed from personal experience and interaction with educators (see section 4.3.5) that the aforementioned questions needed answers, my PhD study was born.

In summary, the significance of my study is potentially twofold. Firstly, my primary aim is to use the educators' experiences to theorise about the value of providing EALCs with ready-made intervention tools in general and the value of the Rm2R intervention in particular as a pathway to educator support and resilience. Thus, my study aims to build theory regarding the usefulness of offering ready-made interventions as a pathway to resilience for EALCs, as urged by South African researchers (Louw et al., 2005:205; Theron, 2009:231). On a second level, if the use of the Rm2R intervention, which is a bibliotherapeutic intervention using traditional African stories (see section 1.2), proves to be a helpful tool for EALCs, it will offer an inexpensive indigenous tool and contribute supportively to lay counsellors' professional functioning and therapeutic interventions with black South African orphans. Thus, my study further aims to explore the extent to which educators who are willing to function as lay counsellors find the Rm2R intervention useful in their support of black South African orphans. On this level my study offers a potential contribution to practice.

1.2   BACKGROUND OF THE RM2R STUDY

The aim of the Rm2R intervention, a SANPAD-sponsored research project (see http://readmetoresilience.co.za), was to test whether traditional African stories have the potential to encourage resilience in African orphans. My research was part of the SANPAD study known as Rm2R (Theron, 2008a), but somewhat different, as other students and researchers had shown that the stories do encourage resilience in orphans (Wood et al., 2012b:225). My study was an extension of the Rm2R intervention study by focusing on the experience of the lay counsellors using the Rm2R intervention as a means to theorise about the value of providing EALCs with a ready-made intervention tool in the interest of supporting EALC resilience. As explained in the introduction to my study, EALCs are profoundly challenged by the complexity of their roles and by the many social, economic and psychological threats to orphaned children's well-being. In an effort to partner with EALCs towards their resilience and that of orphaned children and to theorise about the value of offering EALCs ready-made interventions to use in the course of their duties, my study explored their experiences of the Rm2R intervention.

Story collection took place in 2009 for the original Rm2R project. Three researchers of the SANPAD team sourced 30 traditional stories from community members (elders) familiar with traditional African stories that encourage positive coping. Community members were asked to tell stories that they were told in their youth that had made them feel more able to cope with difficult circumstances. Through a review process, using a multiracial panel of psychologists and educators and researchers in the SANPAD team, 31 out of 90 stories were selected as being most likely to improve resilience. These stories were then sent to a multiracial panel of five psychologists throughout South Africa, who were asked independently to rank the 24 stories most likely to encourage resilience. The 24 stories most chosen then formed the contents of the Rm2R intervention. These stories were piloted and it was found that two were not suitable. Anecdotal reports and initial analyses found that the Rm2R intervention in general encouraged black South African children orphaned between the ages of nine and 14 to cope more adaptively with the challenges of their orphanhood (Theron, 2011). The communities involved in the piloting of

the Rm2R intervention were positive about the changes they observed in the participating orphans (Mayaba et al., 2011). Following this piloting, the 22 stories that were considered resilience promoting (Theron, 2010) were the ones I used with the EALCs who participated in my study (see Addendum H and/or http://readmetoresilience.co.za).

1.3   PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of my research is to theorise about the value of providing EALCs with ready-made intervention tools. A secondary, but related purpose explores EALCs' experiences of the Rm2R intervention strategy as a pathway to resilience for both orphaned South African learners and themselves.

1.4   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

My research was guided by the following primary question:

What is the value of providing EALCs with a ready-made intervention tool in the interest of supporting EALC resilience?

The secondary questions were:

- What are EALCs' experiences of the Rm2R intervention strategy as a possible means of encouraging the resilience of orphaned black South African learners?
- What are EALCs' experiences of the Rm2R intervention strategy as a possible means of encouraging their own resilience?
- What refinements do EALCs recommend for the Rm2R intervention in order to address frustrations (if any) they experienced during its implementation?

1.5   THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The overarching framework of my study is that of Positive Psychology, which focuses on the strengths of individuals and their communities and is concerned with interventions that offer buffers against adversity, nurture resilience and limit pathology (Seligman, 2005:4–6). Although I do describe the challenges facing EALCs (see Chapter Three), this is done to contextualise the need to support

EALCs' resilience. Figure 1.2 offers a visual overview of the concepts and theories that underpinned my study, with a specific focus on the positive concepts of resilience and interventions in the context of risks for the positive adjustment of individuals at a given point in time.

CONTEXT OF CHRONIC/MULTIPLE RISK

Positive Psychology

(Resilience)

Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)

Social Ecology of Resilience (Ungar, 2011)

Interventions: processes promoting resilience

Lay counselling

Bibliotherapy

Positive adjustment (at a given point in time)
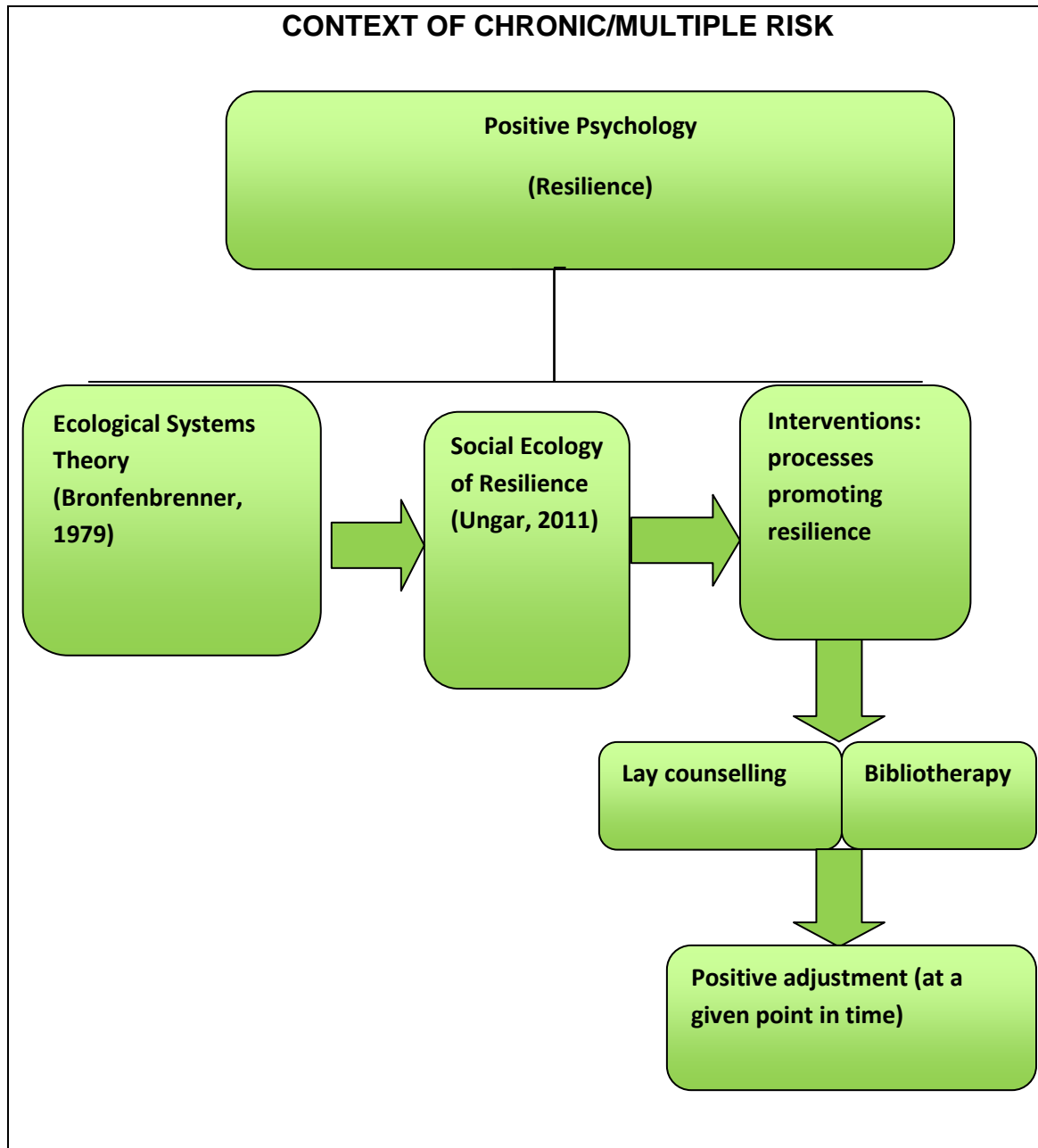
Figure 1.2 The theoretical and conceptual framework of my study

Social researchers have recognised the importance of understanding strengths and patterns of positive adaptation, and not only understanding risks to eliminate adversity, thus **Positive Psychology** was born. As part of this broader conceptual framework (Seligman, 2005:3) there was thus a change

from deficit-focused theories/models of human development to competence-focused theories/models (Masten, 2011:501). One component of Positive Psychology is resilience (Masten et al., 2009:118; Masten, 2011:493).

Resilience is often defined as doing well despite adversity or risk (Masten, 2011:494; Masten et al., 2011:103; Sapienza & Masten, 2011:267). It is recognised that a significant threat has to be present in order to conceptualise resilience. For this reason resilience is not synonymous with concepts such as coping, well-being, competence or good mental health (where a significant threat is not necessarily present) (Rutter, 2012:33). Although all of the aforementioned are Positive Psychology constructs, they do not require the presence of risk to be identified.

Risks can include hardship (e.g. poverty, orphanhood), trauma (e.g. sexual abuse, loss) and biological pathology (e.g. disability), or can be cumulative risks (e.g. poverty, being orphaned and social marginalisation) (Goldstein & Brooks, 2006:3). Most typically, studies of resilience have been conducted in contexts of cumulative risks mostly because risk is seldom insular (Bottrell, 2009:323). Cumulative risks are multiple environmental, personal and genetic risk factors that are known to predict a negative outcome (Luthar et al., 2000:544; Luthar, 2006:742; Masten et al., 2009:119; 2011:108).

Masten (2001:234) claims that everyone is able to experience resilience from "ordinary human adaptive processes" (Masten, 2001:234; Masten et al., 2011:111). Similarly, Johnson and Lazarus (2008:19) describe resilience as a "self-righting mechanism that is accessible to all". For the individual to be able to activate this "self-righting mechanism", she/he must have access to available resources from the ecology (Johnson & Lazarus, 2008:19). Individual attributes such as self-efficacy, intelligence and competence are important attributes in themselves in shaping resilience (internal resources). However, these attributes are also shaped by social influences from the environment (external resources) (Luthar, 2006:754; Rutter, 2005a:3; 2012:34).

The understanding that resilience is shaped by both internal and external resources is formalised in Ungar's (2010a:6; 2011:1) recent **Social Ecology of Resilience Theory**. This theory of resilience mirrors **Bronfenbrenner's theory**

of child development (1979:21), which posits that development relies on interactive inputs from all levels of an ecosystem (discussed in more detail in Chapter Two). From the realisation that ecological systems play a crucial role in development generally and the development of resilience, resilience was (eventually) understood as an interactive, complex and dynamic process that encompasses multiple, reciprocal transactions between the individual, family, community and culture systems (Bottrell, 2009:323; Cicchetti, 2010:145; Lerner, 2006:40; Luthar, 2006:754; Masten, 2011:503; Theron & Donald, 2012:1).

Specifically, resilience transactions draw on the capacity of individuals to access resources, and the capacity of their physical and social ecologies to make these resources available in ways that are meaningful to the individual and congruent with his/her culture (Ungar, 2010a:6; 2011:1). One way of making resources available is in the form of formal interventions. Masten et al. (2009:128) suggest that interventions typically have three aims: (i) to reduce risks that predict poor adjustment; (ii) to support people who are already at risk to access resources or assets that will help them to cope better with the risks they face; and (iii) to support people at risk to develop support systems that will promote their positive adjustment to risk. From the perspective of the Social Ecology of Resilience Theory (Ungar, 2010a:6; 2011:1), interventions – particularly those that increase access to assets or mobilise human adaptive systems (see Masten et al., 2009:128) – offer individuals a way of accessing resources that can make a real difference to how they cope with prevailing adversity. Moreover, from the perspective of this theory, social ecologies have a duty to intervene in ways that support people at risk to become more resilient. Thus, Schoon (2005:221; 2007:94), Schoon and Bartley (2008:24), Schoon and Bynner (2003:21), Ungar (2008:218; 2010b; 2011:1), Ungar et al. (2007:287; 2008:1) and Lerner (2006:40) argue that resilience does not consist only of inner strengths, but also of cultural, relationship and community resources (made available via **interventions**) that work in tandem, resulting in a resilience-enhancing outcome. In other words, resilience is not just the responsibility of the individual, but also of the **social ecology**: the individual reaches out and the social ecology reciprocates (and vice versa).

One form of intervention that makes assets/resources available (Masten et al., 2009:128) is **bibliotherapy** performed by **lay counsellors,** which contributes to the positive adaptation of orphans and lay counsellor themselves. Bibliotherapy can obviously be used by registered counsellors, psychologists and other mental health practitioners too, but in the context of this research I explored the value of the Rm2R bibliotherapeutic intervention as an example of a possible effective ready-made intervention to enhance EALCs' resilience in a context of multiple risks. Using EALCs' experiences helped me to understand the value of ready-made interventions for their resilience and in so doing to encourage **positive prevention and adaptation** for them and their learners (as aimed for in Positive Psychology).

However, the positive outcome of resilience is not always static. Resilience is a fluid, ever-changing state and a dynamic process (Lau & Van Niekerk, 2011:1167; Masten, 2011:494; Rutter, 2012:35). Thus, new risks or protective factors will often emerge when a person's circumstances change (thus changing the adaptive process of the individual) (Luthar et al., 2000:544). One should recognise that a life-span approach is needed that recognises that resilience processes develop before, during and after the occurrence of an at-risk experience (Lerner, 2006:40; Rutter, 2006:1; 2012:34). For example, risk factors and protective resources/processes might differ at different stages of life for each gender and are affected by cultural contexts within a family (Ungar, 2011:3; Werner, 2006:103). What constitutes an effective protective resource/process in one generation may change in another generation (Ungar, 2011:3; Werner, 2006:103).

In summary, then, the framework of my study is that of Positive Psychology (Seligman, 2005:3). It further draws on positive constructs such as resilience and asset-focused intervention (particularly bibliotherapy as enacted by EALCs), as directed by the Bronfenbrenner-inspired theory of Ungar (2011:1). At the same time, this framework recognises the complexity of supporting individuals at risk (EALCs in my study) towards resilience, given the chronicity of the risks they face and the dynamism of positive adjustment.

1.5.1 Concept clarification

Because various concepts are used repeatedly in my study, I will clarify them below. The explanations below summarise how these concepts are understood in the context of the study.

1.5.1.1 Resilience

As already noted, resilience is the capacity to "do well" (Ungar, 2010a:6) in life despite difficult life circumstances. This is encouraged by protective resources embedded in the social ecology as a whole (and not just in an individual) that foster the development of such positive outcomes. Thus, these include protective resources in the individual (e.g. a sense of humour, good intellectual skills, self-efficacy, faith) (Ungar, 2010a:6) and in the individual's ecology (e.g. positive schools, home environment, peer and family relationships, community resources) (Ungar, 2010a:6). When the individual navigates towards these ecological resources and negotiates for support, and when these navigations and negotiation are initiated and/or reciprocated by the ecology, resilience is promoted. In other words, resilience hinges on positive individual–ecology transactions (Bonanno, 2004:20–21; Donald et al., 2010:267; Lerner, 2006:40; Rutter, 2005b:221; 2007:205; Schoon, 2007:94; Schoon & Bartley, 2008:24, Schoon & Bynner, 2003:21, Theron, 2008b:215; Ungar, 2008:218; Ungar et al., 2007:287; 2008:1).

1.5.1.2 Educator-As-Lay-Counsellor

An Educator-As-Lay-Counsellor (EALC) can be defined as an educator who is not registered at the HPCSA (Health Professional Council of South Africa) as a counsellor, but who fulfills counselling duties similar to that of registered counsellors in the school environment. For this reason the educator who fulfils this role is referred to as an EALC (Kotler & Kotler, 2007:124). The HPCSA framework recognises the value of lay counsellors working for NGOs like Lifeline or educators who work at their schools as lay counsellors (Van Niekerk & Hay, 2009:315).

As reported earlier, the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (DoE, 2011) recognise seven collective roles that might be carried out by individual educators. Depending on their specific position in the school, educators will choose or be assigned these roles by the school governing body. Thus an educator might choose to carry out only one of these roles or be assigned one of these roles by the school. One of these roles that the educator might choose to fulfill is that of the community, citizenship and pastoral carer of the school (DoE, 2011). The role of pastoral carer entails seeking to further the holistic development of learners, which includes all aspects of the learners and their school environment (i.e. academic support, physical development, emotional support and inclusive education in the classroom environment) (Kotler & Kotler, 2007:124). However, counselling skills need to be formally introduced to educators (especially EALCs) through recognised courses that aim to train educators functioning as EALCs in counselling skills and other therapeutic techniques (Van Niekerk & Hay, 2009:315). Thus, I refer to educators choosing the role of pastoral carer as EALCs because of the many lay counselling duties that they fulfil.

1.5.1.3 Orphans

An orphan is defined as a child who has lost one of his/her parents. A double orphan is a child who has lost both of his parents (Sherr et al., 2008:527; Skinner et al., 2006:619). In the South African context many orphans lose their parents due to HIV/AIDS, poverty, violence, crime and substance abuse, and are then typically left without resources (e.g. finances, support of parents, role models, education) (Bicego et al., 2003:1235; Bray, 2003:39). Of significance to EALCs are the high levels of vulnerability experienced by most orphans and their associated support needs (Louw et al., 2009:205; Theron, 2009:231; Theron & Engelbrecht, 2012:265).

1.5.1.4 Bibliotherapy

Bibliotherapy refers to using any form of literature, including fiction, to support individuals/groups to cope better with difficulties (like loss, bereavement, anxiety, anger, and so on). Bibliotherapy can include self-help books that the individual reads to gain insight and skills to cope better, or reading to or telling

the individual a story that has the potential to alleviate psychological distress (Heath et al., 2005:564; Rosen, 2003:46; Townsend, 2009:27).

1.5.1.5 Intervention

An intervention is an attempt to provide help for someone who is in some kind of psychological distress. Intervention strategies can involve therapeutic or social interventions. In the case of this study therapeutic intervention with orphans can involve the educators as part of the school community to facilitate resilience (Donald et al., 2010:268). From a Positive Psychology perspective, positive interventions seek to buffer individuals against adversity and to augment individual and community strengths (Seligman, 2005:5). Typically, resilience-promoting interventions take three general routes: risk-reducing, asset-accessing or -increasing, and the mobilising of adaptive systems (Masten et al., 2009:128).

1.6   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The following is a summary of the research method that I used in my study. See Chapter Four for a full discussion of my research methodology.

1.6.1 Research paradigm

Every individual views the world in her/his own significant way and this influences how she/he makes sense of the world (Creswell, 2009:5). Different individuals will have different experiences, and from their interpretation of these experiences their life worlds will vary (Sameroff, 2010:16; Ungar, 2011:8). This understanding aligns well with an interpretivist paradigm that supports social constructivist research (Creswell, 2009:8; Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2007:32). This kind of research assumes a relativist ontology (there are multiple realities), a subjective epistemology (knower and respondent co-create understandings), and a naturalistic (in the natural world) set of methodological procedures (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:13). In my study I work from a constructivist perspective because I assume that participants will have varied experiences of using a ready-made intervention (in my study, the Rm2R intervention) and so bring varying interpretations of the value of such an intervention.

Moreover, working from a constructivist paradigm implies that I, the researcher, will also be interpreting what occurs. For a start, a researcher has certain assumptions in terms of which she/he views the world and, in effect, views and interprets the research data. Because of my reading of especially Ungar's (2011) and Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theories (see Chapter Two), I assume that people and systems influence one another. This can have positive outcomes (as in the instance of resilience), but also negative ones. Because of my personal experience as a counsellor and my reading of the challenges and tasks of EALCs (see Chapter Three), I believe that educators face multiple challenges that threaten their resilience. Knowing that educators (especially EALCs) are expected to fulfil multiple roles that include being a carer and that they are not always adequately trained for these roles (Van Niekerk & Hay, 2009:159), I assume that EALCs will need support.

I further assume that in practice EALCs probably fulfil/adapt many of the tasks described in the scope of practice of professional registered counsellors as set out by the Professional Board of Psychology (South Africa, 2011; Professional Board for Psychology, 2007). I make this assumption because similar interventions are required by lay counsellors and professional counsellors in the school context. I do, however, recognise that an educator fulfilling a lay counsellor role is not professionally trained and I acknowledge the restrictions this implies. In my discussion of the tasks of EALCs (see section 3.2) I emphasise the importance of lay counsellors referring cases that are beyond their competence to professionals and not regarding themselves as counselling professionals. Lay counsellors are merely there to fulfill a gap created by the lack of professional school counsellors in the school system. This gap is partly because of a lack of finances and inadequate recognition of professional counsellors, because "psychologists may erroneously believe that a clinical psychologist can do everything while other categories are limited in their scope" (Pretorius, 2012:514). All of these assumptions will shape how I conceptualise resilience and the roles of EALCs, and how I make sense of (i.e. interpret) how participants interpret their experience of using the Rm2R intervention.

My interpretivist paradigm (Creswell, 2009:8) also influenced my choice of research design. Because I believe that the systemic context in which people are situated will influence how they make meaning of their situation or that meaning will differ from system to system (Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2007:31), I needed to choose a research design that was flexible and allowed for deep exploration of participants' meaning making. A qualitative research design was the clear answer (Terre Blanche et al., 2006:274).

With this in mind, I set out to discover the value of providing EALCs with ready-made intervention tools. I explored the value of such interventions by discovering how the participants interpreted and experienced the Rm2R bibliotherapeutic intervention to encourage resilience within themselves and their orphaned learners. I was aware that I, in turn, would interpret their interpretations and that this would enable me to construct (or co-construct) the findings that I present in Chapter Five (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:10; 2011:13).

1.6.2 Research design

As stated above, I chose a qualitative design (Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2007:32) consisting of a phenomenological strategy of inquiry (Creswell, 2009:177). In my study I wanted to explore the value of ready-made interventions by understanding the experiences of EALCs using the Rm2R intervention (as an example of a ready-made intervention) with black South African orphaned learners. I specifically focused on EALCs' experiences of the Rm2R intervention as a means of supporting their own resilience in the face of the many challenges that they face. I assumed that if in using the Rm2R intervention EALCs experienced that the resilience of orphaned learners was enhanced, this would have a positive spin-off for EALCs and leave them feeling more able to support learners.

As I wished to discover what the experiences was of educators that fulfilled the role of counsellor, I drew my participants from student-educators currently improving their skills to be lay counsellors. These participants were identified by being part of modules named "Community counselling" and "Lay counselling for educators" (see section 4.3.2 for an extensive description of participant

recruitment). My participants were, therefore, purposefully recruited (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:206). To generate data I used the following three methods: focus group interviews (Creswell, 2007a:215), the draw-and-write technique (Mitchell et al., 2011:31) and research diaries (Creswell, 2009:181) (see section 4.3.3). The data obtained were analysed by means of the constant comparative method (Merriam, 2009:175) using inductive content analysis (Creswell, 2009:175; Ellingson, 2009:55; Merriam, 2008; Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2007:37). This method led to a deeper understanding of EALCs' experiences of the Rm2R intervention (see Chapter Five). I took care to conduct a trustworthy study (see section 4.3.7) and I am confident of the validity of the findings that emerged.

1.7 ETHICAL PROCEDURE

This research is part of the Rm2R (Read-me-to-Resilience) project, which was approved by the North West University ethical committee (approval number 0011-08-A2) and the Gauteng Department of Education. In addition, I worked ethically, as explained in Chapter Four (see section 4.4).

1.8 STATING THE LIMITATIONS OF MY STUDY UPFRONT

Given that I am a young, white, Afrikaans-speaking woman, I anticipated a number of challenges relating to language barriers, cultural differences and trust issues. I took the following steps to address these:

Possible language barrier: Within my study none of the participants were mother-tongue English speakers. This proved partially to be a language barrier when I conducted the focus group interviews. Participants were also expected to express themselves in English or Afrikaans in their research diaries and explanations of their drawings. I attempted to limit the language barrier by reconfirming data if I thought that participants' perceptions/experiences would have been differently expressed if they had used their mother tongue. My inclusion of drawings was a further attempt to bridge possible language barriers (Theron, 2008c:33). I chose to not use an interpreter as student-participants were confident they would cope with interaction in English, given that they were studying in English.

Cultural differences: As noted above, I am an Afrikaans-speaking person and some of my participants were isiZulu-/Sesotho-speaking educators. What I experience as a valuable resource to become resilient in my life could be different from the isiZulu-/Sesotho-speaking participants' experiences. Thus, I had to be very sensitive to the assumptions that I brought to the study especially with these isiZulu-/Sesotho-speaking educators. My cultural background socialised me to value education, achievement and the Christian faith, and to draw on these resources in times of trouble. To overcome possible resultant bias in my expectations of what encourages resilience, I interacted regularly with my promoter. I repeatedly asked her to comment on the meaning I was making of the participants' experiences and to point out where cultural differences might bias my interpretation or blind me to alternative interpretations. I also checked my understanding carefully with isiZulu-/Sesotho-speaking participants and colleagues. My literature study also enabled me to guard against bias as it guided my understanding of the indigenous Africentric view of resilience-promoting resources the participants could have and sensitised me to the value of indigenous pathways to resilience (see section 2.4.2.2).

Trust issues: Because I was directly involved with the participants, I needed to win their trust. Because I am a lecturer at the NWU (the participants are students at the NWU), participants could have trusted me because they are familiar with the university and its lecturers. However, they could also have distrusted me because I might have been seen as being in a powerful position. To overcome this limitation I took great care to explain the purpose of my study, the rationale for using the data methods to generate data, and how my position as researcher was equal to that of participants, meaning that I regarded them as co-researchers (i.e. as a co-researcher there was less opportunity for me to abuse my power as a lecturer) (see section 4.4.3).

1.9 CHAPTER DIVISION

Figure 1.3 illustrates the layout of the study.

CHAPTER TWO - CONCEPTUALISING THE SOCIAL ECOLOGY OF RESILIENCE	• The theoretical framework of resilience will be discussed, in particular the evolution of the concept of resilience and the Social Ecology of Resilience.
CHAPTER THREE - DEVELOPING RESILIENT EDUCATORS-AS-LAY-COUNSELLORS	• Chapter Three gives an overview of the many challenges and tasks facing EALCs in the South African and school context. This chapter ends by describing how resilient EALCs can be developed.
CHAPTER FOUR - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	• My phenomenological research methodology, embedded in an interpretivist paradigm, will be discussed in detail.
CHAPTER FIVE - RESEARCH FINDINGS	• The findings arising from my study will be presented. I present them as three disctinct sets of findings (in response to sub-question 1-3), using data from all three data generation methods. I do not answer my primary question in Chapter 5.
CHAPTER SIX - DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS	• I discuss my findings by comparing them to the literature. The findings and the discussion of the findings are then synthesised to offer an answer to my primary research question concerning the effectiveness of ready-made interventions as a tool for EALCs' resilience.
CHAPTER SEVEN - SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS	• In this chapter I offer a summary of the thesis, which includes my reflections and comment on limitations, as well as recommendations for future studies.

Figure 1.3 Overview of the layout of the study

1.10 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I provided a motivation for my study: many challenges face educators needing or wanting to fulfil the role as pastoral carer or lay counsellor. Consequently there are calls to support EALCs to be (more)

resilient to such challenges. One way of intervening towards resilience is to provide access to resources (also called "asset-focused strategies" (Masten et al., 2009:128). For EALCs, a useful resource could be ready-made counselling or support programmes, but the current literature does not provide a deep understanding of the value of ready-made interventions tools for EALCs. This left me wondering what the value would be of providing EALCs with a ready-made intervention tool to support their resilience and that of orphaned and other at-risk children. I also outlined the conceptual framework in which my study is grounded. I briefly summarised the methodology that I used to answer my primary and secondary research questions. In the next chapter I explore the concept of resilience, with special emphasis on the Social Ecology of Resilience Theory (Ungar, 2011).

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUALISING THE SOCIAL ECOLOGY OF RESILIENCE
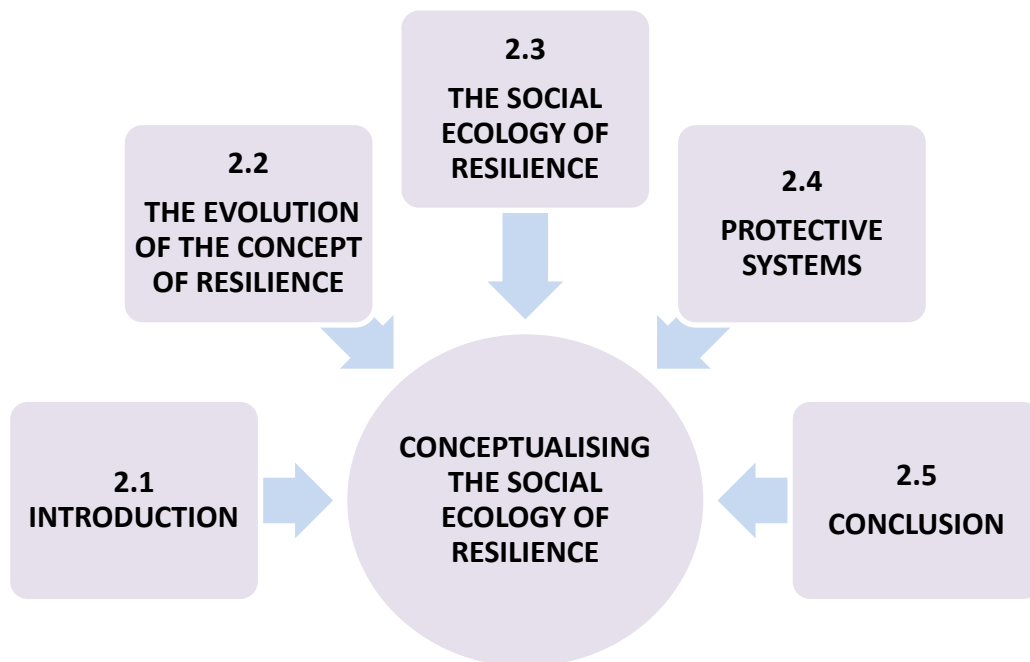
Figure 2.1 Overview of Chapter Two

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter introduced the conceptual framework of the thesis and clarified key concepts (i.e. resilience) pertaining to my study. In Chapter Two the concept of resilience will be elaborated on to provide a broad understanding of what positive adjustment is and how it is typically promoted. This understanding is important to gauge how well the Read-Me-to-Resilience programme enables EALCs to promote their own resilience and resilience among their learners. The chapter starts by giving a short overview of how resilience research has developed over the last four decades. Thereafter, the Social Ecology of Resilience is discussed with emphasis on the transactions that take place between individuals and their ecosystems as being fundamental to resilience. Thereafter, a broad overview of the protective processes that promote resilience is provided.

2.2 THE EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPT OF RESILIENCE

The way in which our understanding of the concept of resilience developed is portrayed somewhat variably in the literature (Ungar, 2011:3; Masten & Wright,

2010:241). This chapter will adapt the waves model recorded by Masten and Wright (2010:241) to explain the evolution of our understanding of this concept as it developed over the past four decades.

The earliest studies on the subject (Anthony & Cohler, 1987; Werner & Smith, 1982) were done by researchers who explained resilience in terms of people who were "vulnerable, but invincible" (Werner, 1996:47) or even "invulnerable" (Anthony & Cohler, 1987:10). Thus, the literature suggested that individuals were able to rise above adversity, but did not question the influence of external risks (e.g. poverty). Also, when individuals did not show resilient functioning, it was explained in terms of their not possessing the internal protective factors to make them resilient instead of focusing on the absence of environmental protective factors (Ungar, 2011:1).

In the first wave of research on resilience, researchers focused on the conceptualisation and operalisation of resilience to gain basic descriptive data (Masten et al., 2011:103; Masten & Wright, 2010:214; Sapienza & Masten, 2011:267). Research focused on individuals' personal qualities, which included traits (e.g. high self-esteem), skills (e.g. problem solving) and genes (e.g. high intelligence) as some of the protective factors (Johnson & Lazarus, 2008:19; Luthar et al., 2000:544; Masten, 2001:228; Masten, 2011:494; Masten et al., 2009:119) responsible for encouraging individuals to be "invulnerable" (a term no longer used in current resilience research) (Anthony & Cohler, 1987:10). A second aim of resilience research was to explain why some individuals were able to overcome adversity while others were not (Luthar et al., 2000:544; Masten, 2011:494; Masten et al., 2011:103; Sapienza & Masten, 2011:267). However, during this first wave of research researchers started to acknowledge that an individual's intrapersonal resources (or internal support systems) were not the only determining factors of resilience. Both the family and the wider social environment also influence an individual's resilience (interpersonal resources or external support systems) (Luthar et al., 2000:544; Rutter, 2006:1). Nevertheless, the result of the first wave of research was that many lists of protective factors were created without explaining HOW resilience develops in an individual (Masten & Wright, 2010:214).

In the second wave of research on resilience the focus shifted to the processes of resilience, i.e. "how" resilience develops (Masten & Wright, 2010:214). Resilience was seen in terms of "the capacity, processes, or outcomes of successful adaptation in the context of significant threats" (Luthar et al., 2000:544; Masten, 2011:494; Rutter, 2012:34). Researchers tried to understand how factors such as the child, the family and the environment are involved in a positive outcome when cumulative risks are present (Luthar et al., 2000:544; Masten, 2011:494). They proposed a number of resilience models (e.g. variable-focused, person-focused, pathway and transactional models) (Masten & Cutuli, 2009:120–26; Masten & Motti-Stefanidi, 2009:732). A complete description of the models that were proposed is beyond the scope of this thesis, but can be found in Masten and Cutuli (2009:120–26). In the third wave of resilience research researchers started to apply processes in the form of interventions that contributed to programmes, policies and preventative interventions (Masten et al., 2011:103; Masten & Wright, 2010:214; Sapienza & Masten, 2011:267). The aim was to make a positive difference to people who were thought to be at risk of negative outcomes (Theron, 2012a:333). Examples of such interventions included different types of intervention strategies such as risk-focused strategies (the prevention of risk and stressors); asset-focused strategies (improving the number or quality of resources); and process-focused strategies (mobilising the power of human adaptive systems) (Masten et al., 2009:128).

The fourth wave of resilience research revisited waves one to three to address the gaps in the research, with a focus on modern technology. In an effort to explain the complexity of resilience, researchers began to examine previously underresearched influences on resilience (Masten, 2011:500; Masten et al., 2011:103; Masten & Wright, 2010:214; Sapienza & Masten, 2011:267; Ungar, 2011:3). Some of these gaps included the influence that genetics (e.g. a predisposition to depression) play in the development of resilience (Masten, 2011:500; Ungar, 2011:3). Another gap related to understanding how biological factors (e.g. brain chemistry) predict positive developmental outcomes in stressful environments and – even more importantly – how genes and environments interact to shape these outcomes (Masten & Wright, 2010:214). A final example of a gap in resilience research in the previous three research

waves was the lack of focus on how resilience processes vary across cultural contexts (Masten & Wright, 2010:214; Ungar, 2011:3).

2.3   THE SOCIAL ECOLOGY OF RESILIENCE

Despite the progress made in research waves one to four, Ungar (2011:1) was concerned that the understanding of resilience still focused too much on the individual. For this reason he proposed the concept of the Social Ecology of Resilience (Ungar, 2011:1) to explain the social transactions that transpire between the individual and the multiple systems found within his/her social ecology (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:21; Donald et al., 2010:41; Lerner, 2006:40). Figure 2.2 gives an overview of the concept of the Social Ecology of Resilience adapted from Bronfenbrenner's (1979:21) Ecological Systems Theory.
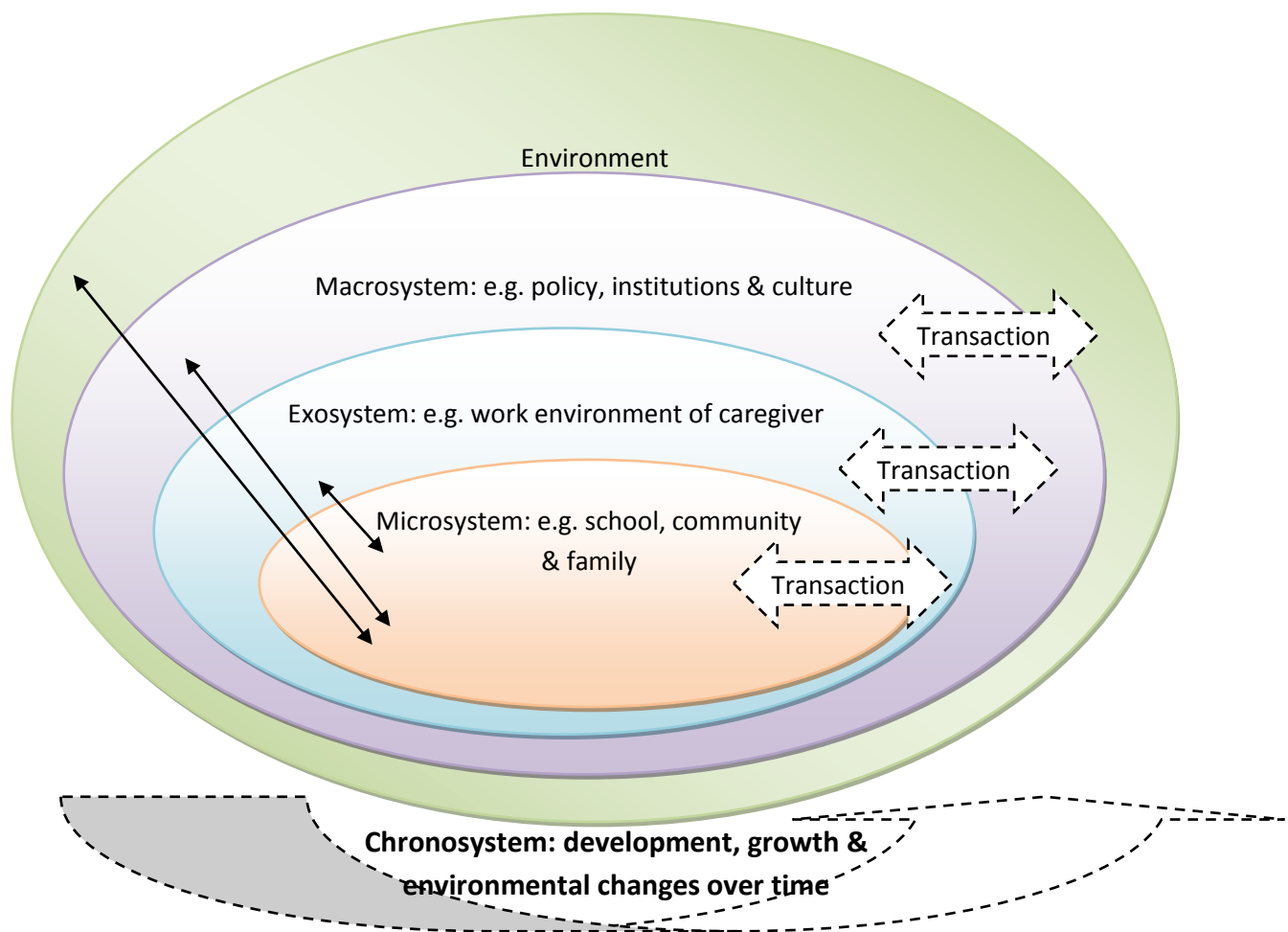
Figure 2.2   The Social Ecology of Resilience

Source: Bronfenbrenner (1979:21); Donald et al. (2010:41); Ungar (2011:7)

The concept of the Social Ecology of Resilience (Ungar, 2011:7) reflects an ecological-transactional understanding of how an individual's resilience processes are influenced by his/her environment (Lerner, 2006:40; Ungar, 2011:7). In order to better understand this concept, it is important to understand the Ecological Systems Theory of Bronfenbrenner (1979). In this theory resilience is understood to be a reciprocal process that is influenced by a specific ecological system (Lerner, 2006:40; Ungar, 2011:1). Thus, the ecological systems framework is fundamental in understanding the Social Ecology of Resilience, especially the influence of the macrosystem (e.g. cultural ecology) on the various microsystems (Luthar & Zelazo, 2003:539; Rutter, 2005a:11; Veeran & Morgan, 2009:55).

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory of child development looks at a child's development within the context of the system of relationships that form his/her environment. Proximal interactions are the most influential in shaping the child; such interactions occur in face-to-face, long-term relationships (e.g. mother–child or child–friend relationships). In contrast, distal contexts are contexts that the child is not directly involved with, but which still influence his/her development (e.g. the father's work). To further explain child development one should understand it in terms of person factors, process factors, contexts and time. For example, person factors (such as the temperament of the child or parent) will partly determine process factors (the forms of interactions that occur in the family). The contexts (such as the family, school or local communities) in which interactive interactions occur will similarly determine how the child develops, all of which will occur over time (changes over time in the child and the environment) (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:21; Donald et al., 2010:41; Fernando, 2012:368; Lau & Van Niekerk, 2011:1168; Lee, 2010:649; Ungar, 2011:3; Veeran & Morgan, 2009:55).

Furthermore, Bronfenbrenner (1979:6) explains that nested systems each have an effect on the child's development. A nested system means that each system level is contained in the next system level (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:6; Donald et al., 2010:41). For example, every person is part of the microsystem (e.g. the individual, family and school) in which beliefs and values are developed. The child's beliefs and values might influence both the mesosystem (e.g.

relationships with peers) and the exosystem (e.g. values demonstrated by parents at work), and vice versa. Furthermore, the macrosystem (e.g. educational policy) influences the child's ability to function effectively in the school environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:6; Fernando, 2012:368). The various systems can influence each other mutually, thus creating reciprocal interactions between the various systems. Children are thus embedded in multi-level, dynamic ecological settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:21). Bronfenbrenner's conceptualisation of embeddedness includes the multi-level systems that consist of the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem, which in turn are all part of the chronosystem, as discussed below (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:21; Donald et al., 2010:41; Lau & Van Niekerk, 2011:1168; Lee, 2010:649; Ungar, 2011:3; Veeran & Morgan, 2009:55).

- **The microsystem**

The microsystem consists of the immediate environment that the child engages with and matures in (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:3). Multiple contexts are involved in the microsystem such as the individual, family, school and other organisations where the child interacts with people on a daily basis. Donald et al. (2010:41) suggest that microsystems have a more direct, or proximal, effect on individuals. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979:22), it is essential to consider the environment as it is experienced and perceived by a child, not just its objective properties. Activities, roles and interpersonal relationships constitute the elements of the microsystem. Home is often the first and most significant microsystem in a child's life, with another being his/her day-care institution or school.

- **The mesosystem**

The mesosystem is a set of microsettings (e.g. family and school) associated with one another and involves the 'interrelations' of the different relationships within the microsystem that a child is actively involved in. The mesosystem thus consists of the interrelations between two or more settings (such as between the family and school) in which a developing person is actively involved (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:25). The different settings of the microsystem interact with each other and these relationships influence the development of the child.

For example, if a child experiences conflict with parents in the family context, then he/she might not be able to concentrate at school, or vice versa (Felner, 2006:140). Sub-systems (such as the child's siblings) can also be further influenced by these experiences, leading to complex interactions between the various microsystems.

- **The exosystem**

The exosystem refers to settings in which the child is not directly involved nor has influence over, but which might still influence the child. It may include, for example, the parents' places of work, networks of friends, extended relatives and educator unions (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:25; Donald et al., 2004:52). The exosystem also consists of the community-environmental level, such as the educational district or the medical facilities that are available, all of which have an impact on the child (Visser, 2007b:25). The influence of the exosystem on a child is illustrated in the following example: when a parent is dismissed from his/her place of work the child could be placed at risk of non-resilience by not achieving his/her goals, whatever they happen to be. The settings in which the parent transacts have the potential to influence how the parent will in turn transact with the child (Felner, 2006:141).

- **The macrosystem**

The macrosystem contains the dominant social structures that include societal beliefs, policies and institutions common to any particular social group, ethnic group or culture (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:26). It refers to consistencies in the form and content of lower-order systems that may arise through the culture or sub-culture in which the child is embedded. The macrosystem is also the farthest removed from the child's direct experience, but still influences him/her. Felner (2006:140) suggests that the macrosystem is the dominant system that influences the micro- and exosystem, as well as the relationships between microsystems. For example, if the economic structure of a country cannot support schools and communities and the government is not capable of implementing appropriate policies, then the child in the microsystem will be affected negatively. People in positions of power (e.g. policy-makers) can also regulate the ability of the child to navigate for resources in the ecosystem.

Influences from the broader macrosystem might therefore increase the various risk factors for the child (Ungar, 2012:23).

All of the abovementioned systems imply a complex, dynamic setting (as summarised in Figure 2.2) in which bi-directional transactions take place (Sameroff, 2009:7). Families, communities and culture offer the reciprocal provision of resources that answers Ungar's (2011:10) concept of navigation and negotiation. Thus, all of the systems described by Bronfenbrenner are interdependent and collaborate in negotiations towards achieving resilience (Lau & Van Niekerk, 2011: 1168; Lee, 2010:649; Ungar, 2011:3; Veeran & Morgan, 2009:55). For example, for an individual to negotiate and navigate towards resilience-promoting resources, the individual needs particular qualities (e.g. flexible thinking or determination) to be able to seek out and make the most of resources made available by the ecosystem in which he/she is embedded. At the same time, the micro- and macrosystem will need to capacitate the individual by offering supportive resources and processes. Conceptualising resilience as a process that needs both individual agency and ecological support takes the focus off the individual (meaning that individuals cannot be blamed for not being resilient) and emphasises that resilience is a complex, multifaceted process that will vary from context to context and be influenced by the culture of a given ecology (Ungar, 2011:4–10). The four principles that underpin Ungar's (2011:4) concept of the Social Ecology of Resilience explain how navigation, negotiation and reciprocal capacitation work to decentre individuals as the drivers of resilience processes and focus attention on resilience as a shared process that is complex, often atypical and culturally relative. These four principles are decentrality, complexity, atypicality and cultural relativity (Ungar, 2011:4–10). A description of each is provided below.

- *Decentrality:* This principle emphasises that explanations of resilience should not only focus on individual youths (or other individuals) as the drivers of their own resilience. In other words, youths must be "de-centered" (Ungar, 2011:6) when positive adjustment is explained. Rather than focus on individual youths, Ungar (2011:6) emphasises the interactions between individuals and their environments as possibly

resilience promoting. Ungar (2011:6) argues that in explanations of why and how positive adjustment takes place, the focus should shift to the social and physical ecology and how it assists interactional processes of resilience (Theron, 2012a:341; Ungar, 2011:6). Prior studies of resilience offer supportive evidence of the need to defocus attention on individuals in explanations of resilience. For example, Beckett et al. (2006:696) report that the higher the risk environment (e.g. being an orphan), the more dependent the individual will be on culturally relevant resources rather than his/her own individual strengths to facilitate resilience. Thus, in interventions towards resilience, the focus on individuals and how individuals should adjust needs to move toward greater emphasis on how social and physical ecologies can better support resilience processes (Schoon, 2007:94; Ungar, 2011:6; Wachs, 2006:28).

- *Complexity:* The principle of complexity refers to temporal, cultural, spatial, contextual and developmental complexity. This means in part that social and physical ecologies are not linear, stable or completely predictable (Theron, 2012a:341; Ungar, 2011:6). For example, when a child shows early signs of resilience, one cannot predict a positive outcome across his/her lifespan. Rather, if children are able to access supportive social and physical ecologies as they mature, then positive outcomes could follow, but these would relate to a specific context and time. Resilience is not nurtured just by accessing protective resources. In contrast, researchers such as Luthar et al. (2000:543), Schoon (2006:123) and Werner and Smith (2001:23) suggest that early exposure to tolerable amounts of adversity and experiences of coping well with such adversity might facilitate later resource availability and resilience. In situations where tolerable amounts of adversity facilitate later resource availability, the environment is more likely to influence resilient outcomes than individual traits (Ungar, 2011:7). For example, an intervention carried out by Dishion et al. (1999:175) with troubled teens showed that the facilitators presenting the intervention typically had a greater effect on how individuals progressed than individual variables like motivation. Thus, those teens that received the 12-week intervention typically showed decreased levels of involvement with crime than those who only

received the study material to go over on their own. Thus, resilience models should be created in terms of the principle of complexity while keeping in mind that the model might be appropriate for a specific context at a specific time, but might need to change across context and over time (Barton, 2005:135; Schoon, 2007:94; Ungar, 2011:7).

- *Atypicality:* Ungar (2011:8) suggests that promotive processes might not work in all contexts, because what constitutes behaviour that promotes resilience in one culture will not be a benchmark for resilience-promoting behaviour in another culture (Day-Vines & Day-Hairston, 2005:236; Theron, 2012a:341, Ungar, 2011:8). Every context contains culturally specific behaviour patterns that constitute relevant benchmarks for how resilience should be understood. In other words, the way in which one community might define resilience might differ from that of another community. Equally, what might constitute acceptable pathways to resilience in one community might be very different in another community and might even seem atypical or unusual when viewed from a dominant cultural perspective. Ungar (2011:8) calls this phenomenon "hidden resilience". For example, dropping out of school might be perceived by a specific community as a protective process. Community members might reason that the young person is providing for his/her family, despite the potential negative long-term developmental consequences for him/her (Ungar, 2011:8). Thus, the principle of atypicality suggests that less focus should be placed on generic assumptions of what positive adjustment is and that explanations should rather be context dependent (Ungar, 2011:8; Theron, 2012a:341; Wang & Ho, 2007:623).

- *Cultural relativity:* Culture involves not just race and ethnicity, but other factors like shared beliefs, values, language, practices, institutions (Veeran & Morgan, 2009:53) and traditions (Ingraham, 2000:232; Schellenberg & Grothaus, 2009:440; Ungar 2011:9; Van Niekerk & Hay, 2009:240). According to Ungar (2011:9), the outcomes of resilience interventions (i.e. how successfully they promote positive adjustment) will be influenced by the context in which the interventions are facilitated

and whether these contexts can be characterised by the distinctive nature of the local culture or a homogenised global culture with shared human experiences. In other words, what resilience means and how it can be promoted should be understood as culturally relative (Ungar, 2011:9). Indeed, international research has begun to adapt the concept of resilience to specific cultures and argue for sensitivity to unique social ecologies (Fernando, 2012:368; Kirmayer et al., 2012:399; Masten & Motti-Stefanidi, 2009:721; Ungar, 2011:3). To explain his position on cultural relativity, Ungar (2011:9) cites Kagitcibasi's (2007) study on how attachment patterns between children and parents differ depending on their culture. He uses this study – which showed that even though attachment patterns shared universal features, they were also influenced by the cultural context in which families were positioned – to argue for an understanding of resilience as a process that is shaped by specific cultural contexts. Even though there are universal protective processes that contribute to resilience, the details of these processes vary across cultural contexts (Masten & Wright, 2010:228; Ungar, 2011:9). Ungar's (2011:9) perspective on culturally relative development is supported by Day-Vines and Day-Hairston (2005:236), who state that people's understanding of resilience is culturally relative; i.e. how a person thinks about resilience-promoting behaviour is culturally influenced. Thus, when a child behaves in a way that matches cultural expectations, there is a greater likelihood that he/she will be seen as resilient (Ungar, 2011:9). For example, communities in the eastern Free State consider that resilient black youths have an active support system and make the most of this system (Theron et al., 2012:13). Should youth conform to this expectation, their behaviour would be considered resilience promoting. On the other hand, in some Asian communities the opposite is considered resilience promoting: youths who behave independently are considered to be resilient (Cameron et al., in press). However, traditional culture might not be the everyday reality for all indigenous people (particularly because of increasing globalisation) (Muthukrishna & Sam, 2011:76). Ungar (2011:9) cites a study by Georgas et al. (2006) that illustrates how traditional cultures are affected by global practices such

as parenting practices. Theron et al. (2012:17) caution that as black communities become increasingly Westernised, their understanding of resilience is likely to change. Thus, it is important to consider a given community's cultural perception of resilience at a specific point in time (taking into consideration the effects of globalisation) rather than assuming that broad definitions of resilience apply, particularly if resilience development in communities, families and individuals is the aim (Masten et al., 2011:113). For this reason Ungar (2011:10) proposes the fourth principle of cultural relativity in order to sensitise researchers and practitioners to the importance of taking specific, indigenous cultural-coping methods into consideration in order to understand resilience as a complex construct embedded in cultural contexts. Furthermore, to meaningfully support resilience, the processes of resilience that are considered as promotive and protective in a specific cultural context should be considered when intervention strategies are developed (Jones et al., 2012:41; Ungar, 2011:10). Ungar's principle of cultural relativity is also relevant in the South African context. Our country has diverse contexts that may differ from those referred to in the general field of resilience research over the last decades. South Africans might be better equipped to achieve sustainable resilience when there are more culturally relevant studies (Theron & Theron, 2010:1). The results of local resilience studies should also reflect the at-times homogenised South African culture that shares an indigenous knowledge system aimed at overcoming apartheid (Ross & Deverell, 2004:32; Van Niekerk & Hay, 2009:240–44).

Ungar's (2008:225) definition of resilience is as follows:

> the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to health-sustaining resources, including opportunities to experience feelings of well-being, and a condition of the individual's family, community and culture to provide these health resources and experiences in culturally meaningful ways.

This definition is contingent on a social ecological understanding of resilience processes. From this perspective, resilience comprises a series of actions and

interactions that are shared by individuals and their social ecologies in collaborative ways that will vary from one cultural context to the next. In other words, resilience flows from when the individual or the collective community is able to navigate or steer their way to various resources (i.e. psychological, social, cultural and physical) provided by various social systems (i.e. family, community and culture) (Ungar 2011:13; 2012:17). Part of the process of resilience is also the ability to negotiate or bargain for resources from the various social systems (Bottrell, 2009:321; Masten, 2011:502; Ungar 2011:13; Ungar, 2012:17). Furthermore, the social ecology in which individuals are navigating and negotiating needs to respond positively, by partnering with individuals to achieve resilience (Ungar 2011:13, 2012:17). Thus, social systems have to work together to enable the process of navigation and negotiation, to capacitate individuals, and to support positive adjustment in culturally relevant ways (Masten et al., 2011:114; Sapienza & Masten, 2011:271). Resilience-supporting transactions that are shared in culturally congruent ways by individuals and their social ecologies (e.g. family, community) potentiate resilience (Rutter, 2012:41; Ungar, 2012:27). How individuals navigate/negotiate, or what they navigate to or negotiate for, as well as how their ecologies partner in such attempts to adjust well to adversity, cannot be easily predicted, given the atypicality, complexity and cultural relativity of the social ecological processes of resilience (Ungar, 2011:502).

2.4   PROTECTIVE SYSTEMS

Masten and Wright (2010:223–28) and Sapienza and Masten (2011:267) concur with Ungar that resilience processes are complex and shaped by cultural contexts. Nevertheless, they suggest that there are resilience-supporting processes that are common across contexts and cultures. These include attachment relationships, cultural traditions and religion, agency and mastery motivation systems, cognitive competence, self-regulation, and meaning making (Masten & Wright, 2010:223–28; Sapienza & Masten, 2011:267). Masten and Wright (2010:223) call these universal processes "basic human adaptive systems". Thus, for the purposes of this chapter, which aims to provide a broad overview of resilience-promoting processes within a social ecology, I will describe each of these systems and then add brief comments on

how EALCs could harness them to promote resilience in their learners, and for themselves as well. In these brief comments I will adapt the literature, most of which refers to school counsellors, educators or carers; I will assume that these references are equally applicable to EALCs. Thus, for the purposes of this section of Chapter Two the references to EALCs include what the literature refers to as school counsellors or (caring) educators. Figure 2.3 gives an overview of the various protective systems.
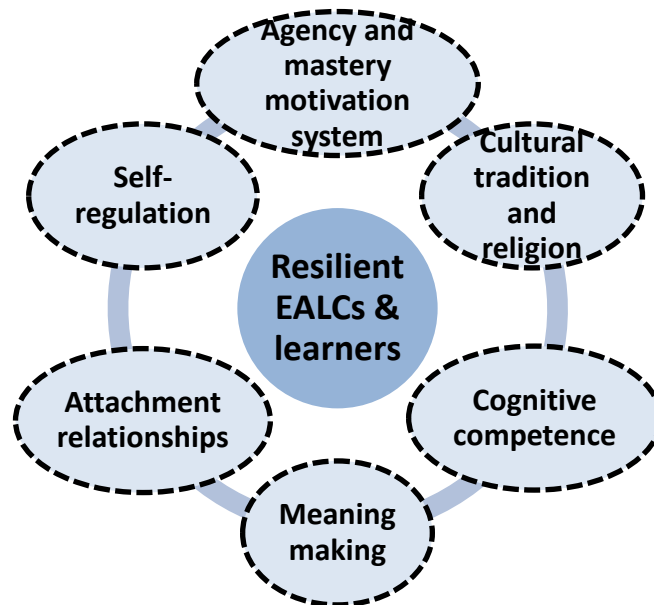
Figure 2.3 The protective systems

Source: Masten and Wright (2010:223–28)

2.4.1 Attachment relationships

Attachment refers to an affectionate tie between individuals who rely on each other for emotional fulfilment (Reber & Reber, 2001:61). Attachment as a process for resilience development could include establishing bonds with competent and supportive adults in the family, but also educators, friends and supportive community members (Cicchetti, 2010:147; Masten & Wright, 2010:223–28). Good caregiving and close relationships with other competent and pro-social people can be a protective factor that allows the individual to better cope with current and later adversities in life (Luthar, 2006:780; Luthar & Zelazo, 2003:545; Masten et al., 2011:111; Masten & Obradovic, 2008:9). From the earliest resilience studies onwards the attachment relationship has been depicted as a powerful biological system shaped through ordinary human

adaptive systems (Ainsworth, 1989; Bowlby, 1982, 1988; Bretherton & Munholland, 1999; Sroufe et al., 1999; Thompson, 2000).

2.4.1.1 Attachment to family

The attachment relationship within a family can include many relationships such as parent–child, sibling–sibling or even extended family attachments. Familial attachments in the context of a supportive family can be one of the most important protective factors for an individual (Blocker & Copeland 1994:290; Luthar, 2006:754; Luthar & Zelazo, 2003:543), especially the parent–child relationship (Anthony, 1987a:153; Benzies & Mychasiuk, 2009:107; O'Koon, 1997:479; Rutter, 2005b:234; Ungar 2008:218; Werner & Smith, 1982:103). A child's attachment to a parent can provide a secure environment for him/her and also facilitate the mastery motivation system, as well as helping the child to develop self-regulation (Masten & Wright, 2010:223). Mastery motivation and self-regulation happen when caregivers support children in ways that modify arousal levels. Parents also nurture cognitive development by choosing appropriate schools and introducing their children to activities that will develop their talents. Furthermore, the parent–child attachment relationship encourages the child to become socialised into appropriate behaviour at school, the community and society at large (Masten & Wright, 2010:223).

South African studies also support the importance of the parent–child attachment relationship as a protective resource (Barbarin et al., 2000:24; Cronje, 2008:118; Dass-Brailsford, 2005:579; Germann, 2005:39; Smukler, 1990:7; Theron, 2007:368; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005:1). Some South African studies also point to the significant influence of the mother as a buffer against adversity (Germann, 2005:39; Smukler, 1990:7; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005:1). Furthermore, one South African study finds that parenting practices that encourage resilience are correlated with race (Kritzas & Grobler, 2005:1). For example, democratic-authoritative parenting practices develop a sense of emotional coping strategies in white youth, but in black youth democratic-authoritative parenting creates problem-focused coping strategies (Kritzas & Grobler, 2005:1).

Children who experience positive attachment to a parent from birth are more resilient than those with parents who are absent due to long working hours, because of death or for some other reason (Anthony, 1987b:32; Laser, 2008:322; Musick et al., 1987:249; Werner & Smith, 1982:59). The loss of a parent typically induces grief (Masten & Wright, 2010:223). Furthermore, when a child is exposed to maltreatment from caregivers the consequence is that he/she might have negative attachments to significant others later in life (Masten & Wright, 2010:223; Sroufe, 2005:349; Sroufe et al., 1999:11; Thompson, 2000:145). In contrast to research that predicts negative adjustment after maltreatment, other research on maltreated children shows that 25–50% of maltreated children show positive psychosocial functioning later in life (Collishaw et al., 2007:211; Haskett et al., 2006:796; McGloin & Widom, 2001:1021). In a study by Collishaw et al. (2007:211), evidence shows that these children form significant-other-attachment relationships that reinforce their positive adjustment (Collishaw et al., 2007:211). Significant others could include nurturing and supportive siblings who contribute to positive psychosocial functioning later in life (Ungar, 2008:218; Werner, 1995:83; Werner & Smith, 1982:97). South African research also confirms the notion that supportive siblings can contribute to positive psychosocial adjustment (Dass-Brailsford, 2005:582; Smith & Drower, 2008:154). A South African study by Smith and Drower (2008:154) reports that a child's ability to positively adjust might be improved by older siblings who supported the sibling child in his/her early years when parents were absent.

Various studies support the idea that other extended family members (e.g. cousins, aunts, uncles or grandparents) might have a positive influence on an individual (Bernard & Este, 2005:450; Cluver & Gardner, 2007:321; Rogoff, 2003:119; Werner, 1995:83; Wolin & Wolin, 1993:112). Studies also show that extended family members can provide emotional and material support (Clauss-Ehlers & Levi, 2002: 271; Masten & Reed, 2005:75). Similarly, various South African studies claim that social support can be provided by extended family members, particularly grandmothers (Dass-Brailsford, 2005:582; Smith & Drower, 2008:152; Theron, 2007:368; Theron et al., 2011a:807; Theron, 2013). In summary, South African studies foreground the advantages of supportive family relationships, particularly for black youths. Protective families scaffold

resilience-enhancing processes by providing a buffer against violence (Barbarin et al., 2000:16), enabling girls to cope with molestation (Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005:1), encouraging black youth to finish their education (Dass-Brailsford, 2005:582; Theron, 2007:368), enabling adaption in the context of HIV/AIDS (Ebersöhn, 2007:1), and nurturing a feeling of belonging and value within a family system (Theron, 2007:368; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005:1).

EALCs or school counsellors can harness the protective resource of attachment to family by involving family members or extended family members when intervening with high-risk children. By drawing on positive values learnt from family, high-risk children can be encouraged to develop resilience. EALCs can also draw on the emotional and material support provided by family members to further support children at risk (Clauss-Ehlers & Levi, 2002:271; Masten & Reed, 2005:75). EALCs can further educate family members about the possible role they can play in developing children's resilience and helping them to form protective affiliations with family members (such as grandmothers or uncles). Parents can be involved with programmes to enhance the quality of their parental skills and to include mentors in the child's life (Masten et al., 2008:81). By engaging with families to develop support structures for youth, EALCs can support children in culturally relevant ways by sharing knowledge with family members of at-risk children (Theron, 2013). When EALCs themselves have healthy attachments, their own resilience is potentially supported.

2.4.1.2 Attachment to educators

International studies show that learners' attachment relationships to their educators within the school community can promote positive outcomes (Bernard & Este, 2005:451; Harvey, 2007:33; Laser, 2008:330; Lewis, 2000; Luthar & Zelazo, 2003:537; Rutter, 1983:24; 1984:57; Werner & Smith, 1982:97). Similarly, various South African studies emphasise learners' attachment to educators as helpful, caring, motivating and supportive; in short, educators act as a buffer against adversity (Barbarin et al., 2000:24; Dass-Brailsford, 2005:583; Ebersöhn, 2007:1; 2008:11; Johnson & Lazarus, 2008:19; Lau & Van Niekerk, 2011:1168; Malindi & Machenjedze, 2012:71; Mampane & Bouwer, 2011:114; Theron, 2007:368; Te Vaarwerk, 2009:100; Theron & Donald, 2012:6; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005:1).

When learner–educator attachments are positive they often lay the foundation for later positive relationships (e.g. with a life partner and friends) (Masten & Wright, 2010:223; Werner, 2006:98). Learner–educator relationships are seen as important especially during the adolescent years because of the multiple challenges facing learners at this stage of their lives (Hamre & Pianta, 2011:625; Lynch & Cicchetti, 1997:81). Furthermore, international studies acknowledge the positive outcome with immigrant youth when educators are able to buffer emotional stressors associated with the school environment through positive attachment relationships (Green et al., 2008:393). The literature also acknowledges the challenges of meeting the developmental needs of children from multiple cultures in the school and community context (see Berry, 2005:697).

Some South African studies find that learners perceive their educators as important for their resilience development. Studies such as Theron and Dunn (2010:242) and Theron and Malindi (2010:726) find that learners that are able to form resourceful attachments are able to overcome obstacles such as divorce (Theron & Dunn, 2010:242) and living on the streets (Theron & Malindi, 2010:726). Furthermore, a local study shows that educators whose approach is one of handing out high praise and low punishment are able to bond with learners and achieve classroom success (Theron & Engelbrecht, 2012:266). Educators need to form attachment relationships with learners to fulfil the role of carer, especially in underdeveloped countries. South African studies recognise that attachment relationships between educators and learners allow the learner access to surrogate parents, counsellors, confidantes and health promoters, especially in HIV/AIDS contexts such as South Africa (Bhana et al., 2006:5, Hoadley, 2007:251; Morrow, 2007:3; Theron et al., 2008:77). When educators establish attachment relationships with learners, they are able to be effective role models and mentors, and are then able to encourage youth resilience (Dass-Brailsford, 2005:574; Mampane & Bouwer, 2011:443; Theron, 2007:357). Another South African study demonstrates that when educators are able to listen to learners affected by HIV/AIDS, they are able to promote these learners' resilience (Loots & Mnguni, 2008:63). Malindi and Machenjedze's (2012:71) study focusing on male street learners who attended school also

shows that educators can expose youth to healthy and supportive social and academic environments that enable them to develop into resilient adults.

There are numerous reports in the literature of the advantages of positive educator–learner interactions. For example, educators can motivate learners to strive to achieve better academic results and this in turn can generate better circumstances later in life (Rutter, 1983:23). South African studies support the notion of learners being motivated to stay in school to better their life circumstances (Phasha, 2010:1245; Theron, 2007:367; Theron & Malindi, 2010:725). In Phasha's study, black learners were encouraged to stay in school and were further encouraged to rise above their circumstances to obtain a good job, be a role model for others and not to disappoint other community members (Phasha, 2010:1245). Another South African study shows that another advantage for black learners with divorced parents is that a positive attachment to their educators might establish a safe environment in which to explore problem situations (Te Vaarwerk, 2009:92). Furthermore, South African educators can have a positive influence on how peers and colleagues perceive at-risk learners and interact with them. Educators in the study by Theron and Malindi (2010:726) are perceived as encouraging black South African street learners to form resourceful relationships at school.

I assume that the same benefits for educator–learner attachments as set out in this section are also true for educators that function as lay counsellors. Masten et al. (2008:82) remind intervention researchers that educators and counsellors (and thus also EALCs) must be seen as "first responders" to a crisis, because learners spend most of their time during the day at school. For this reason it is important that EALCs form attachments to learners in order to be able to be helpful, caring, motivating and supportive, and thus act as a buffer against adversity for learners (Barbarin et al., 2000:24; Dass-Brailsford, 2005:583; Ebersöhn, 2007:1; 2008:11; Johnson & Lazarus, 2008:19; Lau & Van Niekerk, 2011:1168; Malindi & Machenjedze, 2012:71; Mampane & Bouwer, 2011:114; Theron, 2007:368; Te Vaarwerk, 2009:100; Theron & Donald, 2012:6; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005:1). The way in which three novice educators formed positive attachments with their learners is reported in a study done by Bondy et al. (2007:326). Essentially, the educators were able to develop attachments to

learners through "insistence" and by engaging in a "culturally responsive communication style" (Bondy et al., 2007:326). According to Bondy et al. (2007:342–43), "insistence" is the process whereby the educators were able to communicate the consequences of actions in a calm way and insist that learners behaved appropriately, as well as to insistently repeat instructions in a respectful way. A "culturally responsive communication style" was noted among educators who were able to use culturally appropriate humour and terms that were familiar to the learners' popular culture. EALCs who learn to interact insistently and in culturally aligned ways with at-risk learners thus might find it easier to build constructive relationships with them.

Another strategy to help EALCs form attachments to learners is to educate the EALCs to "care for" learners, rather than to "care about" learners (Shevalier & McKenzie, 2012:1092). To "care for" learners means to involve learners in taking responsibility for the attachment relationship developed with EALCs. When learners show recognition to EALCs for the support they receive, then EALCs will more likely bond with learners, and vice versa, which enables the cycle of being cared for to continue (Shevalier & McKenzie, 2012:1092). In a study by Cholewa et al. (2012:251), educators were able to form healthy emotional connections with learners by attending to learners, listening empathically, believing in learners, involving disengaged learners, and supporting learners' success. Moreover, educators who revealed themselves to learners and were transparent by being playful, joking and voicing their thoughts were better able to connect with learners. EALCs can learn from the above on how to form proactive connections with learners.

It is possible to influence the support provided to learners by influencing how other colleagues perceive "troubled" learners and gaining the support of colleagues for interventions with learners (Masten et al., 2008:79; Theron & Malindi, 2010:726). EALCs can introduce interventions that promote strengths in learners rather than focusing on their weaknesses, in other words, instead of working according to a deficit model (Shevalier & McKenzie, 2012:1087). For example, rather than just focusing on a learner's poor academic achievements, EALCs might encourage educators to rather focus on the pro-social

attachments and intrinsic motivation that might help learners to overcome their difficulties.

2.4.1.3 Attachment to peers

As learners grow older, the dominant attachment relationship shifts from primary caregivers to peer attachments (Laible et al., 2000:45; Wilkinson, 2004:479). Peers are learners of the same age and similar social status (Hornby, 2010:1083). Attachment to peers can provide a resilience-promoting resource in a risk environment (Laser, 2008:330; Luthar & Zelazo, 2003:533; Masten & Wright, 2010:223; Ungar et al., 2007:290; Werner & Smith, 1982:97). Learners can also benefit from peer relationships, because there is a more equal balance between the two roles than with the parent–learner (protected–protector) power relations role (Masten & Wright, 2010:223). Numerous South African studies see peers as a resilience-promoting resource (Barbarin et al., 2000:16; Dass-Brailsford, 2005:582; Germann, 2005:39; Johnson & Lazarus, 2008:19; Kruger & Prinsloo, 2008:241; Pillay & Nesengani, 2006:131; Smith & Drower, 2008:154; Te Vaarwerk, 2009:10; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005:1). Multiple benefits arise from peer relationships, including social acceptance and positive identity and values (Pillay & Nesengani, 2006:131). A learner's stress can be reduced when difficulties are shared and advice is provided by peers. Thus, emotional support and social competence can be provided to the learner seeking peer support (Clauss-Ehlers & Levi, 2002:271; Dass-Brailsford, 2005:579; Laser, 2008:330; Smith & Drower, 2008:154; Stevens, 2005:52; Te Vaarwerk, 2009:10; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005:1).

A South African study showed how white learners whose parents were going through a divorce depended on their peers for advice and to provide them with a safe space to vent (especially the girls) (Theron & Dunn, 2010:238). In another South African study (Theron et al., 2011c:808) learners living in low socioeconomic circumstances and facing a loss of extended family spent most of their time with peers. Spending time with peers and sharing belongings were especially true for the black boy participant in the study of Theron et al. (2011c:808). The attachment with peers encouraged pro-social attachment that enabled resilience. Another benefit from social peer relationships is learnt social competence behaviour that influences self-regulation by supporting or

discouraging risk-taking behaviours (Masten et al., 2011:113). For example, Letourneau et al. (2008:182) find that among resilient homeless peers, learners' life skills increased when they supported one another and avoided negative influence from other peers.

EALCs can encourage attachment to pro-social and supportive peers, which in turn should benefit EALCs because it potentially offers them a way of strengthening vulnerable learners. Such encouragement could take the form of supporting healthy peer relationships, teaching social skills, and encouraging learners at high risk to form positive attachments to peers (Theron et al., 2011c:808).

2.4.1.4 Community attachments

Resilience-promoting attachment relationships in the community, such as attachments to neighbours and church leaders, can support youth. One form of support is the capacity of these attachments to offer role models and opportunity for youths to witness problem solving, positive meaning making and self-regulation, which in turn helps youth to cope with daily stressors (Luthar & Zelazo, 2003:545). In turn, the community also benefits when learners develop into competent adults (Luthar, 2006:754). In poorer communities close social attachments between families and communities will promote overall cohesion and support mechanisms (Luthar & Zelazo, 2003:533). Attachment relationships in the community are protective in that they can provide psychological security, encourage cognitive development and provide access to additional caring relationships (Masten et al., 2011:112; Masten & Wright, 2010:223), especially if a learner has lost his/her parents (Masten et al., 2011:112). Similarly, South African studies acknowledge community support as resilience promoting (Barbarin et al., 2000:16; Dass-Brailsford, 2005:582; Edwards et al., 2005:143; Jewitt, 2001:12; Pillay & Nesengani, 2006:131; Smukler, 1990:7; Theron, 2007:368; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005:1). In these South African studies community support relates to adults who are respected and support youth towards success (Dass-Brailsford, 2005:582). South African studies also confirm community support (e.g. psychological and material support) as providing psychological support (Jewitt, 2001:12) and encouraging active support from peers (Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005:1;

Pillay & Nesengani, 2006:131) and educators (Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005:1). More so, community members who promote the sharing of material support and advice, and motivate for community mobilisation (Jewitt, 2001:12) to limit crime and violence (Theron, 2007:368) are perceived as supporting the community. Other South African studies show that communites promote resilience when they provide youth with opportunities for enjoyable activities (Govender & Kilian, 2001:1; Ward et al., 2007:165) that help them feel competent (Bloemhoff, 2006:138; Mampane & Bouwer, 2006:443). Furthermore, these studies show that resilience is encouraged when youth are provided with recreational activities (Theron, 2007:368) and a sense of belonging, security and comfort (Ebersöhn & Maree, 2006:14).

Neighbours can provide emotional or material support to encourage resilience and can also be positive role models (Masten & Reed, 2005:75). The ability of role models such as neighbours to provide support in the community is emphasised in the literature (Werner & Smith, 1982:162; Wolin & Wolin, 1993:112). Similarly, South African studies confirm that neighbours can provide material and emotional support and teach life skills that enable youth to handle difficult life circumstances (Dass-Brailsford, 2005:582; Theron, 2007:367; Theron et al., 2011c:802; Theron & Malindi, 2010:726).

Learners' attachments to community members mean that EALCs can utilise community members to provide support (Pillay, 2011a:352). Pillay (2011a:352) emphasises the need for school counsellors to work in a community-based environment. School counsellors or EALCs can be supported by positive role models in the community, especially when educators perceive themselves as not having the necessary tools to effectively enable learners (Ferreira, Ebersohn, & Odendaal, 2010:101; Louw et al., 2009:205; Mpofu et al., 2011:116; Van Rooyen & Van Den Berg, 2009:81).

2.4.2 Cultural tradition and religion

Cultural tradition includes "organized belief systems, knowledge, institutional practices, and material artifacts" that reinforce self-regulation in adaptive behaviour (Lee, 2010:643; Masten et al., 2011:113). They are ever changing and dynamic, and are passed on from generation to generation (Muthukrishna

& Sam, 2011:76; Ross & Deverell, 2004:205). Cultural traditions are often protective practices that promote the resilient functioning of individuals in a society such as South Africa stratified by race and ethnicity (Burt et al., 2012:649). Furthermore, cultural traditions potentially contribute to the vitality and continuity of a community of people (Kirmayer, 2012:401).

2.4.2.1 Religion

Cultural practices such as religion might influence youth's ability to develop resilience in adverse circumstances (Masten et al., 2011:113). For example, religious practices support youth's attachment to spiritual leaders by creating trust that can provide support in difficult times (Cicchetti, 2010:147; Masten & Wright, 2010:228). Futhermore, prayer (as part of a belief system) might support the self-regulation of emotions in a protective way by, for example, encouraging trust in a higher power for guidance and help, and thus promoting feelings of control and hope rather than despair (Masten & Wright, 2010:228). Religious affiliations create an attachment relationship (a feeling of security, optimism and comfort) to a higher power similar to the secure base provided by a positive parent–learner attachment relationship (Cicchetti, 2010:147; Masten & Wright, 2010:228). In summary, when an individual embraces a religious belief system, meaning and values are encouraged that might promote resilience within an individual (Crawford et al., 2006:355; Masten et al., 2011:113).

Cultural practices that include hope, faith and religious affiliations happen over time and are a way to create meaning in the world around us (Lee, 2010:643; Masten et al., 2011:111). For example, religious practices might nourish faith and hope, creating meaning from childhood into adulthood, and can be a protective process that promotes resilience in later life (Cicchetti, 2010:147; Masten & Wright, 2010:228; Veeran & Morgan, 2009:53). When meaning is created through lived experiences, people might develop mastery motivation in an effort to adapt to a context of adversity (Masten & Wright, 2010:227). People might adapt, for example, by developing compassion for others, growing in personal strength and having greater faith in their future (Masten & Wright, 2010:227). Opportunities are created through the meaning people ascribe to their socioecological framework (Masten & Wright, 2010:228; Ungar, 2012:22).

People create an understanding of the social context around them through the maintenance of sociocultural relationships such as religious affiliations (Veeran & Morgan, 2009:60).

A few South African studies also recognise religious practices as fundamental to the adaptive system of cultural tradition and religion (Barbarin et al., 2000:24; Denis, 2007:37; Dass-Brailsford, 2005:579; Edwards et al., 2005:143; Germann, 2005:39; Kruger & Prinsloo, 2008:241; Pienaar et al., 2006:391; Smukler, 1990:7; Theron et al., 2012:15). For example, Germann (2005:39) reports that when religion is practised in communities, orphans in child-headed households in these communities are encouraged to develop resilience. Another example is found in Dass-Brailsford's study (2005:579), which reports that some black South African university students adjusted to stressful contexts by lighting a candle and communicating with the ancestors. In other words, their cultural ancestral beliefs buoyed them up because they felt that they were not alone, even though they were far from home. Denis (2007:37) also reports in his study that amaZulu adults were able to transition positively during life-threatening political conflict by either maintaining contact with the ancestors or practising the Christian faith.

EALCs could encourage learners to utilise the religious practices embedded in their cultural traditions, as described by South African authors such as Denis (2007:37 and Dass-Brailsford (2005:579). By supporting learners' cultural traditions, EALCs are able to create meaning in the world around the learners and motivate them to develop resilience (Lee, 2010:643; Masten et al., 2011:111). Culturally appropriate church affiliations could also be encouraged by EALCs as means to develop values and skills among learners to enable them to stay in school and develop positive hope for the future (Condly, 2006:228; Tol et al., 2009:176). Research has long recognised church affiliations as providing valuable support to church members that helps them overcome adversity such as trauma, illness and abuse (Condly, 2006:228; Greene, 2007:81). Although EALCs in the South African public school system are not allowed to enforce any religious acts on learners, EALCs can still refer learners and their families to culturally appropriate religious institutions (Condly, 2006:228). Similarly, EALCs can benefit from the support of church affiliations.

Congregation members can provide support to young people to help them cope with challenging situations in the school context by giving advice or providing specialised skills (e.g. providing religion-specific counselling to learners). EALCs can alleviate the stresses experienced by young people by carrying out various religious practices such as prayer or readings from sacred texts (e.g. the Bible and the Koran) with congregation members. When EALCs perform religious practices, they can gain strength from other members of the spiritual community by becoming more involved in that community. Furthermore, EALCs might gain a feeling of growing closer to their deity and learners by actively respecting the values taught by various religions (e.g. compassion and kindness). Religious practices might even help EALCs to find meaning and gain control when they themselves are distressed (Pargament, 2011:275).

2.4.2.2 Africentric practices

A report by the American Psychological Association Task Force on Resilience and Strength in Black Children and Adolescents (APA, 2008) reports on how an Africentric worldview plays an essential part in the resilience processes of African American youth. The report points to a general lack of acknowledgement in the resilience literature of "racial, ethnic, and cultural forces, nuances, and competencies, particularly as they relate to the resilience and strength of African American youth" (APA, 2008). Many South African resilience studies also acknowledge the need for further culturally relevant studies, especially on how Africentric practices promote resilience (Barbarin et al., 2000:16; Dass-Brailsford, 2005:579; Ebersöhn, 2007:1; 2010:385; Germann, 2005:39; Lau & Van Niekerk, 2011:1165; Malindi & Theron, 2010:318; Mampane & Bouwer, 2011:114; Odendaal et al., 2011:528; Phasha, 2010:1248; Pienaar et al., 2006:391; Pienaar et al., 2011:128; Theron et al., 2011c:799; Theron, 2013; Theron & Donald, 2012:6; Theron & Dunn, 2010:231; Theron & Malindi, 2010:717; Theron & Theron, 2010:1; Theron et al., 2012:1; Ungar et al., 2011:231; Veeran & Morgan, 2009:53). For example, Theron et al.'s (2012:1) study on a rural community's view of resilient Basotho youth shows that, in contrast to Eurocentric perspectives, the participants' verbal, written, and hand-drawn descriptions offer an Africentric understanding of resilience. Studies such as this one confirm the need for deeper exploration of

African conceptualisations of the processes of resilience that underpin black youth's resilience (Theron et al., 2012:1), hence the focus of the present study on Africentric stories.

Africentric practices include an Africentric worldview where people are considered interconnected and inherently valuable. The interconnectedness between people is termed *ubuntu* (which means "a person is a person through other people*")* (Dube, 2009:188; Veeran & Morgan, 2009:59). In societies that are respectful of the *ubuntu* philosophy, youth are taught to respect their elders and their traditional heritage and to be part of a wider community (Mkhize, 2006:187). Everyone in the community is part of socialising youth with *ubuntu* values that include sharing resources and helping others (Munyaka & Motlhabi, 2009:63). Africentrism also consists of spiritual beliefs (i.e. an attachment to God and/or the ancestors) that youth are taught to respect and practise in order to benefit themselves and others (Mkhize, 2006:187). Thus, Africentrism is driven by spiritual beliefs, values and cultural practices that encourage intra- and interpersonal harmony that helps individuals to overcome adversity (Lambert et al.*,* 2005:321; Levers et al., 2011:58; Neblett et al., 2010:105; Utsey et al., 2007:75).

To be socialised in terms of an Africentric worldview is potentially a supportive resource, because this worldview encourages connection to others as part of a shared cultural belief system that provides support in difficult times. A shared cultural belief system and support from others might act as a buffer against adversity, as has been shown in previous resilience studies (APA, 2008; Neblett et al., 2010:105). For example, in the APA report, positive cultural identification is shown to have enhanced learners' performance at school (APA, 2008).

One example of how individuals can be connected to a shared cultural belief system is through oral tradition or the passing on of information by telling stories, anecdotes or histories that are enabling (Theron, 2012b). The telling of stories in a shared cultural experience reinforces a shared identity among a group of people (Kirmayer, 2012:401). Stories of personal hardships that have been overcome will enrich the community and encourage community members also to act as heroes in their personal hardships (Kagan, 2009:258).

Psychology and other helping professions have used enabling stories in the form of bibliotherapy, which entails the reading or telling of stories that teach adaptive behaviour (Brown, 2009:20; Welsh, 2009:30; Winship, 2010:184). Culturally relevant bibliotherapy, or the telling of stories that are aligned with the culture of the listener, has been proved to alleviate distress in some adverse contexts (i.e. divorce, parental loss, alcoholism) and improve individual attributes (i.e. improved self-concept, decreased anxiety, emotional regulation and interpersonal relationships) (Heath et al., 2005:564; Rosen, 2003:46; Townsend, 2009:27).

South African studies also confirm that to be socialised into an Africentric worldview is a supportive resource because individuals are part of a group that they can identify with as their cultural heritage and experience a feeling of belonging, making them aware of enabling cultural traditions and providing access to the resources offered by such traditions (Phasha, 2010:1249; Theron, 2013; Theron & Theron, 2010; Veeran & Morgan, 2009:59). For example, in the South African context bibliotherapy that incorporates folklore, myth, magical stories and Africentric traditions might be a valuable tool to promote resilience (Maree & Du Toit, 2011:31; Wood et al., 2012b:225).

In fact, a South African study by Wood et al. (2012b:225) shows that the Read-me-to-Resilience intervention (a bibliotherapeutic tool) is culturally relevant to South African learners and does indeed encourage resilience (Wood et al., 2012b:225). In another South African study, Theron (2013) relates how individuals (such as grandmothers, educators/lecturers and traditional healers) tell stories reflecting Africentric ways of overcoming hardship. The stories included Africentric values (i.e. respect for oneself, other people, the ancestors and God; tolerance and the ability to endure hardship; and communal harmony) that the participants were able to incorporate into their behaviour in order to change their actions towards positive adaptation.

In Theron's (2013) recounting of two black university students' life stories, it was found that the nuns and lecturer (who were white) were able to enact *ubuntu* values when they supported the two participants materially. Although the nuns and the lecturer were not part of the same cultural heritage as the participants, they were still able to enact the *ubuntu* value of caring for others.

This suggests that when people from different cultural backgrounds can respect the culture of others and align their behaviour accordingly, they can promote resilience.

Another example of a South African study that supports the notion that being socialised into an Africentric world view is a supportive resource is Phasha's (2010:1234) study that focuses on resilience among South African survivors of child sexual abuse. Phasha (2010:1234) reports that victims of sexual abuse were able to draw on components of their cultural upbringing and identification with their cultural background to encourage resilience in themselves. Not only did a positive identification with participants' cultural background encourage resilience, but positive racial identification also enhanced performance at schools (Phasha, 2010:1249).

Another example of how Africentric individuals can identify with their cultural heritage is through Africentric traditions such as traditional healers (sangomas in the South African context) that help individuals to be in harmony with their cosmos in order to find meaning in adverse circumstance (Bujo, 2009:113; Hammond-Tooke, 1989:103; Levers et al., 2011:58; Muthukrishna & Sam, 2011:83). For example, in the study by Theron (2013) a female participant reported that traditional healers played a vital role in her resilience when they gave her instructions to help her deal with a difficult situation. When she fell pregnant, she suffered from complications and went to a traditional healer, who advised her to use traditional medicines and to perform traditional rituals. She was also encouraged to believe that her ancestors and God would help her be well enough to carry the baby to full term. The traditional healer modelled traditional values that inspired her to find meaning in a difficult situation.

EALCs can learn from the studies that suggest that the resilience of African learners is linked to Africentrism when learners are socialised to be respectful of this worldview. As only a few South African educators have training in counselling skills (Mpofu et al., 2011:116), culturally relevant bibliotherapy might be an appropriate group intervention tool in the South African context to be used by EALCs with high-risk learners, as Wood et al. (2012b:225) also note. EALCs can invite family members to share culturally appropriate customs, traditions and stories to be used within the framework of the learner's

counselling sessions (Greene, 2007:219; Kagan, 2009:259). For example, an intervention that could enhance learners' cultural association is to invite families to participate in culturally relevant family activities (e.g. dancing or story telling) at school (Greene, 2007:34). Saleebey (1994:351) warns that some cultural stories might have negative connotations for some people, because cultural meaning has been dominated by generalised notions of a particular culture. An example of such generalised beliefs might be that all black people make use of traditional healers, which is not the case. Freeman (1997:67) suggests that in such cases the stories might have to be rewritten, renamed or updated. Condly (2006:229) further suggests that interventions should consider the developmental stage of the learner. The intervention should be ongoing and should be focused on a specific goal (e.g. learning about the importance of cultural heritage), and all staff members should be convinced about the importance of the intervention. Thus, when EALCs can incorporate relevant Africentric oral traditions in interventions together with families of Africentric descent and staff members, then bibliotherapy might be a culturally appropriate tool to utilise.

Theron (2013) also finds that there are various lessons for school psychologists working with children who have been socialised towards an Africentric way of being. EALCs can learn from these too, particularly from the two black university students' life stories, which include, for example, an appreciation "that resilience processes are moulded by a socio-cultural ecology" (Theron, 2013). One way of understanding the sociocultural ecology of learners might be through culturally relevant techniques such as learners telling their life stories. Another lesson learnt was that EALCs should caution against "assuming that Africentrism is effected uniformly" (Theron, 2013). Various reasons exist that might reduce the centrality of Africentrism, such as the acculturation of youth, and it therefore cannot be assumed that all learners embrace Africentric practices. When EALCS are able to have insight into the lessons expressed in this study (see Theron, 2013), they might be able to better support learners' resilience.

2.4.3 Agency and mastery motivation system

The agency and mastery motivation system is characterised by self-efficacy, self-determination and positive self-perceptions within the work environment (which encompasses the school context) (Cicchetti, 2010:147; Masten et al., 2011:111; Masten & Wright, 2010:224). White (1959:297) first identified the agency and mastery motivation system in his work on competence motivation. He noticed that individuals were motivated to adapt to their environment and experience enjoyment in success (White,1959:297). Bandura (1997:23) expands on the human ability for agency and mastery motivation experiences in his conception of self-efficacy. When an individual has a positive image of his/her capabilities, he/she will make more effort to succeed. Other scholars such as Ryan and Deci (2000:68) have acknowledged the significance of intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is the inner state of a person that pushes or drives him/her to act (Reber & Reber, 2001:194). According to Anthony (1987b:22), being a determined and motivated resilient individual enables a person to reflect on the problem in sight, explore its different aspects and set about actively resolving it. In some longitudinal studies with high-risk learners it is reported that high-achievement motivation was associated with positive adjustment in learners (Fergusson & Horwood, 2003:130; Masten & Powell, 2003:1; Werner, 2006:95; Werner & Smith 1992a:39, 2001:28).

Masten and Wright (2010:224) also confirm the importance of how agency and mastery motivation is a key initiating system (Masten et al., 2011:112: Masten & Wright, 2010:224). For example, before a young person can turn his/her life around, he/she first has to express motivation and goals before he/she can take active steps (usually with a counsellor or educator) to excel despite cumulative risks (Hauser et al., 2006:36; Masten, Obradovic, et al., 2006:173). Werner and Smith (1992b:43) also find that when a learner (more likely a girl than a boy) shows self-efficacy at an early age, then it is more likely that the learner will adapt successfully later in life.

However, agency and mastery motivation must be viewed in its social context (Ungar, 2011:9). For example, a learner might be viewed very positively by his/her peers, but he/she might perform poorly academically or demonstrate misconduct at school (Luthar, 2006:743). Even though the learner is positively

viewed by his/her peers, the learner might still have a disadvantage in terms of school performance. For this reason, authors such as Meichenbaum (2009:186) advocate that interventions should include support for learners to commit to learning and motivate them to achieve in school. Furthermore, the agency and mastery motivation system can be hindered by neglect, which might hinder agency experiences in development. For example, Zeanah et al. (2006:424) focused on orphanages as a developmental context for early childhood and report that when learners were neglected their intrinsic motivation was hindered. The learners in orphanages did not have control over their environment and did not experience opportunities for agency and mastery. Tol et al. (2009:171) emphasise the importance of the role of educators in the education system to motivate learners by providing moral instruction that enable at-risk learners (i.e. learners in orphanages) to achieve their aspirations.

Many South African researchers have found that agency and mastery motivation is important for promoting resilience among black youth (Dass-Brailsford, 2005:580; Phasha, 2010:1246; Smith & Drower, 2008:155; Theron, 2007:368; 2013; Theron & Engelbrecht, 2012:266; Theron & Malindi, 2010:725). Although there are many more examples of how the agency and mastery motivation system is utilised, I will only provide a few. One such example is that of Dass-Brailsford's (2005:580) study of disadvantaged youth who succeeded at university. These black youth were motivated to aspire toward their educational goals. There were many reasons for their motivation (e.g. overcoming poverty and violence in their community), but the outcome was that their motivation contributed to their being resilient to the challenges they faced at an urban university. Another example is that of Phasha's (2010:1246) study of sexually abused individuals.

 Phasha (2010:1246) reports that black individuals were more motivated to stay at school than white or mixed-race participants. This agency and motivation, along with support from others, contributed to their being resilient. Smith and Drower (2008:155) also report that intrinsic motivation enabled black social workers to overcome past adversity by motivating them to achieve their goals in spite of their violence-stricken circumstances. Theron (2013) found in her study that one participant's positive adjustment was nurtured by his determination to

contribute to others and the satisfaction he gained from doing so. The participant's agency and mastery motivation system was activated by cultural values that he was taught in his family and community.

EALCs do not just have the task of teaching, but also of developing learners' agency and mastery motivation, which includes competence in developmental tasks (Masten et al., 2008:79). For example, EALCs might motivate learners to strive towards achieving various goals such as to stay in school in spite of adverse contexts (e.g. violence, poverty and being orphaned or living on the streets) (Malindi & Machenjedze, 2012:2; Phasha, 2010:1245; Theron, 2007:367; Theron & Malindi, 2010:725). Although goals give structure to learners and give meaning to a person's life, they cannot always be attained. In such instances, EALCs have to help learners to decide to either continue to pursue a particular goal or to find alternative goals (Folkman, 2011:44). To help EALCs and learners decide whether to focus on a goal or to choose alternative goals, EALCs can engage in the process of achieving goals as set out by Wrosch (2011:321). Figure 2.4 illustrates this process.
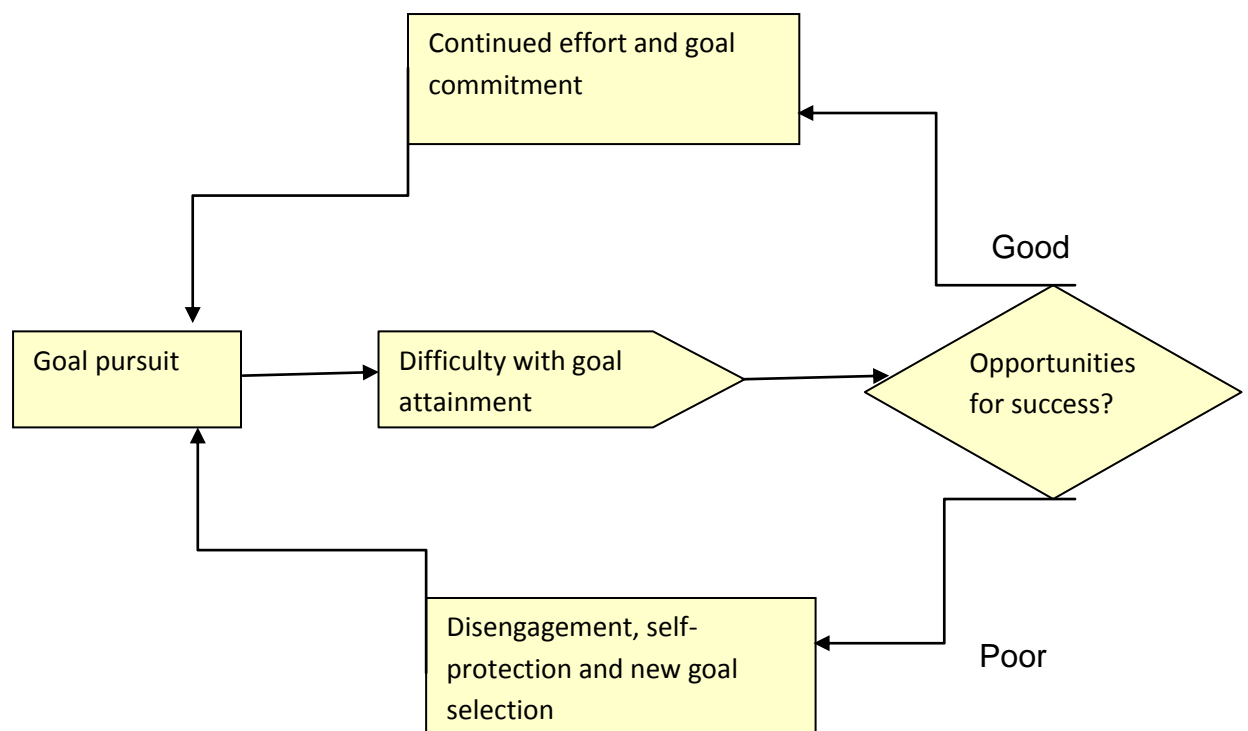
Figure 2.4   Wrosch's process of achieving goals

Source: Wrosch (2011:321)

Wrosch's (2011:321) diagram illustrates that individuals have to ask themselves when they have difficulty with goal attainment if the opportunities for success are good or bad. If the goal is good and possible, then they can continue with the effort and commit to the goal. However, if the goal in not attainable or poor, then they should disengage from the goal, protect themselves from the emotional consequences and find a new goal to pursue.

If EALCs decide to help learners to re-engage with their goals, they can use specific methods to define goals step by step. The **SMART** method requires that goals should be **S**pecific, **M**easureable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic and **T**ime based. Long-term and short-term goals can be planned together to ensure that they conform to the SMART method. If goals are defined and carried out with the support of EALCs, then it might help learners improve their well-being by finding a purpose in life. However, if learners, together with the EALCs, decide to abandon a goal and find alternative goals, then the EALCs must be able to deal with the emotional consequences of abandoning a goal and help the learners to adjust to the idea of an alternative goal (Folkman, 2011:9; Wrosch, 2011:319). Various studies acknowledge the importance of individuals being able to find alternative goals for their own self-protection later in life (Heckhausen et al., 2010:32; Wrosch et al., 2003:1).

If EALCs are able to use methods such as the SMART method or Wrosch's process of achieving goals for themselves and their learners, then they might be able to stimulate the agency and mastery motivation system in both themselves and at-risk learners. When learners and EALCs are motivated, then they might experience a sense of competence and self-efficacy, and can enjoy their achievements. A sense of competence might enable both learners and EALCs to have positive beliefs about their effectiveness in adverse circumstances and foster persistence when goals are difficult to achieve (DeLorme, 2010:108; Masten et al., 2008:79; McCann, 2010:259). For example, learners might be motivated to finish school and pursue further education. EALCs might also be enabled by perceiving themselves as competent in pursuing the goal of supporting youth at high risk (Masten et al., 2008:82; McCann, 2010:216).

2.4.4 Cognitive competence

Cognitive competence includes having the capability to think, consider and interpret in order to carry out tasks or achieve set goals (Reber & Reber, 2001:136). When an individual demonstrates cognitive competence, then he/she is more likely to overcome adverse circumstances and in the process become more resilient, not least because he/she can think of solutions to threatening problems (Anthony, 1987b:22; Lee & Tay-Koay, 2008:258; Werner, 1995:82; Werner & Smith, 1982:120). Problem-solving skills are often linked to outcomes demonstrating resilience (Cicchetti, 2010:147; Masten, Burt, et al., 2006:696; Masten et al., 2011:111).

With regard to learners' cognitive abilities, it is important to remember that their cognitive skills are developing (partly due to ongoing brain development) (Masten et al., 2011:112). This means that in order to be resilient, learners often need to depend on attachment relationships to support their decision-making and problem-solving abilities. Nevertheless, learners' cognitive competence skills in the school context are also normally one of the markers for resilience (Masten & Wright, 2010:225). According to Wong et al. (2007:17) and Kagan (2009:256), learners who were exposed to traumatic events such as violence showed a decrease in cognitive competence and were less likely to graduate from high school.

However, Werner and Smith (1992b:23) report that when a learner (around the age of ten) was able to perform in school and show cognitive competence despite daily hardships, then he/she was more likely to show adaptive behaviour into adulthood (this finding applied to men rather than woman). Walsh (2002:130) found in a study she conducted on the processes necessary for family resilience that open emotional sharing and collaborative problem solving were important for attachment relationships to promote resilience. However, the literature shows some differences between the genders. For example, Bernard (1995:43) found that girls tend to rely on attachment relationships to build resilience, whereas boys preferred active problem solving. Findings reported in studies such as Bernard's have implications for the support EALCs give learners in improving their pro-social functioning towards resilience. Some authors also indicate that skills such as problem solving, communication

and negotiation can be taught by caring educators to promote effective cognitive functioning in learners who have been affected by adversity such as war or displacement (Miller & Affolter, 2002:32; Tolfree, 1996:164).

To further encourage cognitive competence skills, healthy brain development needs to be stimulated with healthy nutrition and chances to learn (Masten & Wright, 2010: 225). Schools can provide learners' from low-income families with basic nutrition and skills development to encourage brain development (Masten et al., 2008:79). Hall et al. (2012:12) report on a speech by Trevor Manuel (minister in the Presidency: National Planning Commission) on the state of our learners' welfare. Manual referred to a study published in *The Lancet* that reported that over 200 million learners worldwide were negatively affected by poverty and malnutrition.

Learners who are cognitively competent can also learn from resilient individuals (such as parents, siblings, educators and community members) about how to become resilient by modelling the behaviour learnt from resilient individuals (Rutter, 1985:606; Wolin, 2003:19). According to Wolin and Wolin (1993:143), participants who were able to demonstrate cognitive competence throughout their lives were more likely to overcome adversity. In order for learners to be able to demonstrate cognitive competence, they should be taught social problem solving, which includes using one's intrinsic capabilities to resolve social problems rather than involving other people to resolve these problems. For example, learners who are able to resolve their own social problems such as conflict with a peer will likely also be able to resolve more complex problems in the future (Rutter, 1984:60; Wolin & Wolin, 1993:143).

Individuals who demonstrate cognitive competence skills will also be able to approach others to assist them with a problem in a way that benefits both individuals, thereby developing resilient behaviour (Ungar et al., 2008:2). In a study by Felsman (1989:69) on Cali street youth, findings indicated that the youth were able to demonstrate problem solving by knowing where to beg for money and thus survive on the streets.

Some studies support the notion that cognitive competence skills may not always play a protective role when learners experience maltreatment or trauma

(Collishaw et al., 2007:211; DuMont et al., 2007:255; Jaffee et al., 2007:231; Luthar , 2006:739; Pine et al., 2005:1781). For example, a study by Pine et al. (2005:1781) suggested that infants were able to better cope in war zones than adolescents because of the infants' under-developed cognitive capability. Infants were not able to comprehend the negative events happening around them and so did not internalise the experience. Luthar (2006:739) also found contrasting findings to general resilience research studies suggesting that highly cognitively developed individuals are able to overcome adversity. In Luthar's (2006:739) study, individuals who were perceived as being more cognitively competent were sometimes more sensitive to adversity. This was especially so when they were aware of high expectations and experienced these as pressure from others to excel regardless of their circumstances.

South African studies also report cognitive competence as protective, particularly with regard to learners being able to engage in constructive problem-solving (Cronje, 2008:105; Dass-Brailsford, 2005:575; Govender & Killian, 2001:6; Johnson & Lazarus, 2008:26; MacDonald et al., 1996:236; Theron et al., 2012:15). For example, Cronje (2008:105), when researching factors contributing to resilience among poor second-language learners, found that when learners had developed sound problem-solving skills, this was valuable for their resilience. Similarly, MacDonald et al. (1996:236) found that resilient youth engaged in more problem-solving techniques than youth that were perceived as non-resilient.

Theron et al. (2012:15) report that international studies characterise cognitive competence as youth achieving scholastically, but that South African adults who are knowledgeable about youth resilience emphasise dedication to schooling and scholastic progress as a characteristic of cognitive competence. Thus, cognitive competence that nurtures resilience is characterised in the eastern Free State communities where Theron and her colleagues conducted research as a willingness to commit to learning instead of achieving scholastic success, as reported internationally. This example reinforces the importance of understanding resilience-supporting resources in context.

In Theron and Malindi's (2010:731) study findings support the notion of how youth's cognitive competence is supported by a commitment to school. By

adjusting youth's approach to school work (thus youth's commitment to school) with the help of educators and other role models in the community, youth are more likely to develop cognitive competence because of a commitment to school. Various other South African studies (Cockburn, 2004:1; Malindi & Machenjedze, 2012:71; Malindi & Theron, 2011:114; Mathiti, 2006:253) also report that youth who are able to negotiate for resources from their ecologies (rather than individually) are regarded as having good problem-solving abilities. These abilities help them to cope with hardship.

EALCs (a potential influential role model) can compensate in a number of ways if youth's cognitive competence is not yet fully developed. By being positive role models, just as educators in the school setting, EALCs can support youth in decision making to attend school and develop cognitive competence skills (Malindi & Machenjedze, 2012:71; Malindi & Theron, 2011:114). EALCs can ask resilient peers and extended family to support their efforts to encourage learners' commitment to education (Tol et al., 2009:169). They can assist in the development of problem-solving skills by asking reflecting questions, reframing issues, and collaborating with learners to work out appropriate and/or alternative solutions. Learners can themselves then learn to manage problematic situations (Greene, 2007:79).

EALCs can introduce programmes to teach learners about aspects of problem solving such as decision making and conflict resolution. They can also introduce learners to valuable and diversified physical, educational and social experiences that might also help to stimulate cognitive development. Thus, EALCs can stimulate learners cognitively through various mechanisms (e.g. various sports activities, multicultural friendships in the school context and educational field trips) that are appropriate in learners' cultural context (Cummings, 1995:126; Pillay & Nesengani, 2006:137).

To further encourage cognitive competence skills, EALCs can stimulate healthy brain development by encouraging community support programmes to provide healthy nutrition feeding schemes. Such schemes can be introduced in schools by involving a diversity of community organisations (e.g. religious institutions and school management teams) to liaise with EALCs (Pillay, 2011b:12). Feeding schemes are currently provided in South African schools (only in

schools that do not charge school fees) and cover about 60% of households, but only for learners attending school. There is, however, still a risk that poor learners attending well-off schools do not receive benefit from feeding schemes (Hall et al. 2012:72).

2.4.5 Self-regulation

Self-regulation is important for socially appropriate adjustment of behaviour and emotional self-regulating skills (Buckner & Waters, 2011:267; Cicchetti, 2010:147; Masten et al., 2011:111; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998:205; Masten & Wright, 2010:226). Self-regulation consists of a broad array of skills (e.g. reflection, planning and the ability to delay gratification) (Dahl & Spear, 2004:539; Masten, Obradovic, et al., 2006:173). In current research self-regulation skills are categorised as executive functions, which depend on neural circuitry situated in the frontal regions of the brain that enable an individual's executive functions (Rothbart et al., 2007:2). Executive functions include the working memory, the ability to delay gratification, self-control, selective attention and being able to change a response that is dominant to an adaptive response (Masten & Wright, 2010:226).

Executive functions are required for school success and social competence in order to prevent anti-social behaviour problems (Blair, 2002:111; Eisenberg et al., 2007:287; Masten & Wright, 2010:226; Rueda et al., 2004:283). Learners who are not able to internalise compliance with appropriate behaviour at school-going age might struggle with school success and peer relationships (Patterson et al., 1992:24). The inability to regulate emotions because of stress reactivity and temperamental irritability might predict anti-social behaviour (Rothbart & Bates, 2006:99).

International research acknowledges attachment relationships as important for the ability of some learners to self-regulate. Several studies show that when learners are exposed to trauma or adversity, they might struggle to regulate their behaviour and alter negative emotions to positive emotions (Berman et al., 1996:329; Ford, 2005:410; Haggerty et al., 1996:5; Kendler et al., 2000:953). Some learners are therefore dependent on attachment relationships with caregivers, peers and community members to regulate their behaviour and

emotions (Masten & Reed, 2002:95). Caregivers can support learners' regulatory function until they have developed better regulatory functions (Ainsworth, et al., 1978:39; Brody, et al., 2002:1505; Eisenberg et al., 2005:1055; Sroufe, 1996:48). For example, caregivers can help learners to manage their behaviour by teaching them impulse control (the ability to delay gratification) (Kagan, 2009:258). However, when caregivers and EALCs provide direction for learners on appropriate behaviour in stressful circumstances, they should consider learners' individual differences in temperament and personality. Each learner behaves differently in stressful circumstances, therefore each develops differently in terms of being able to regulate his/her own behaviour in order to adapt positively to life circumstances (Kochanska & Knaack, 2003:1087).

Later on, peers can also facilitate self-regulation by discouraging risk-taking behaviours (Masten et al., 2011:113; Steinberg, 2008:78). For example, Letourneau et al. (2008:182) found that learner's self-regulation skills improved when peers discouraged the negative influences from other peers and concomitant risk-taking behaviours. Role models in the community can also support learners in developing self-regulation skills by modelling behaviour to support executive function skills (Luthar & Zelazo, 2003:545).

Literature also supports cultural traditions as reinforcing self-regulation in adaptive behaviour by providing a direction for ways to develop such behaviour (Lee, 2010:643; Masten et al., 2011:113). Research on executive function suggests that learners in their pre-school years and teens transitioning into adulthood are most prone to develop executive function skills (Dahl & Spear, 2004:395; Masten, Obradovic, et al., 2006:173). Therefore, prevention strategies focus on helping learners and caregivers with effective culturally aligned strategies in parenting and behaviour to encourage self-control skills and compliance in learners (Masten & Wright, 2010:226). One example of how self-regulation benefited at-risk pre-schoolers is through the Tools of the Mind curriculum, which showed promising results as a strategy for resilience. Learners in a related study were provided with various activities to stimulate brain usage to activate and develop their self-regulation skills (Diamond et al., 2007:1387).

South African studies also confirm the importance of attachment relationships to help learners develop self-regulation skills (Barbarin et al., 2000:24; Cronje, 2008:118; Dass-Brailsford, 2005:579; Germann, 2005:39; Smukler, 1990:7; Theron, 2007:368; 2013; Theron et al., 2011c:808; Theron & Dunn, 2010:242; Theron & Malindi, 2010:730; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005:1). In a South African study (Theron, 2013) one of the participants used his self-regulation abilities to realign his behaviour with his grandmother's and educator's life lessons and cultural traditions. This adjustment meant that he could make use of kinship and community networks to cope well with hardship.

In another South African study, Theron et al. (2011c:808) report that when learners spent time with healthy peers, they were encouraged to develop self-regulation skills because these peers encouraged pro-social choices. Theron and Malindi's (2010:730) findings show how street youth were able to adjust their attitude about going to school when they were inspired by other people in the community whom they perceived as role models. Similarly, another South African study by Theron and Dunn (2010:242) found that learners influenced by the divorce of their parents were able to regulate their behaviour and emotions positively by depending on attachment relationships to peers.

School counsellors or EALCs can help learners to deal with negative emotions (such as conflict) and to behave in a resilient way (Luthar & Zelazo, 2003:545; Pillay, 2012:168; Tol et al., 2009:170). If EALCs can show learners how to regulate their impulses by teaching them skills such as conflict management or pro-social skills, then learners might be able to better regulate their behaviour (Kagan, 2009:258). It is important for learners to exhibit impulse control in order to demonstrate social competence. If learners are able to regulate emotions then they might be able to resolve conflicts, oppose peer pressure and form attachments to peers (Meichenbaum, 2009:186).

Just as the literature reports that peers are able to discourage risk-taking behaviour, similarly EALCs can also discourage such behaviour in learners (e.g. substance abuse and neglecting school attendance) (Masten et al., 2011:113). It is, however, important that EALCs be sensitive to differences in learners because they differ in their self-regulation functioning (Ainsworth et al., 1978:39; Brody et al., 2002:1505; Eisenberg et al., 2005:1055; Kochanska &

Knaack, 2003:1087; Sroufe, 1996:48). The literature also acknowledges the effectiveness of various cognitive-behavioural interventions to aid EALCs in assisting learners to regulate behaviour towards resilience (Meichenbaum, 2009:185). Techniques such as deep breathing, muscle relaxation, controlling thoughts, and imagery might help learners to self-regulate their emotions (Kagan, 2009:265). Other techniques include activating positive emotions while a person is experiencing negative emotions through sensory experiences (e.g. such as a hot cup of tea, which the person associates with comfort) (Folkman, 2011:42).

Basic counselling skills might also help school counsellors or EALCs to use the most appropriate strategy in supporting self-regulation skills by keeping in mind the cultural differences of learners (Pillay, 2012:168). When EALCs acknowledge cultural differences they will also be able to provide culturally sensitive faith-based coping strategies (e.g. religious relaxation imagination exercises) to help regulate emotions towards socially appropriate behaviour (Kataoka et al., 2006:89). By using culturally appropriate methods, EALCs can encourage values such as having a positive attitude, being responsible and showing self-restraint with regard to anti-social behaviour (Meichenbaum, 2009:185).

2.4.6 Meaning making

Meaning making means that an individual is able to make sense of his/her experience (Masten & Wright, 2010:227; Walsh, 2002:130). As Folkman (1998:1216) explains, meaning making is a process that includes:

> using positive reappraisal, through which individuals find meaning by interpreting the situation in terms of deeply held values and beliefs; revising goals and planning goal-directed problem-focused coping, which fosters meaning in terms of a sense of purpose and control; and activating spiritual beliefs and experiences, through which individuals find existential meaning.

The way in which individuals make sense of their lives varies, but this could include positive belief systems that help create hope for the future and a positive outlook on life (Masten & Wright, 2010:227; Walsh, 2002:130). In part,

spiritual beliefs could foster a coping response of creating meaning when a person does not feel in control and help to compensate for his/her insufficiencies (Pargament, 2011:270). Even though the meaning making process is embedded in many cultures' spiritual beliefs, some individuals appear to be capable of sustaining ideas that generate meaning (e.g. having hope for the future) independently of more organised belief systems (Zoellner & Maercker, 2006:626).

To create meaning out of experiences, people need to reduce discrepancies between "global meaning" (their overall beliefs and desires) and "situational meaning" (what they experience in stressful contexts). People experience stress when there is a difference between the two types of meaning. For example, if a person believes that he/she is able to resolve problems, but is not able to resolve a specific problem in a specific situation, then he/she might be motivated to reconcile the inconsistency through various coping processes in order to create meaning. Various coping processes exist such as problem solving, reappraisal processes, goal substitutions and social comparisons (Park, 2011:230). If these approaches were to fail, stress might be heightened.

The international literature acknowledges diverse accounts of the development of meaning making within distressed individuals that show that meaning making as a resilience process should not be oversimplified (Bonanno & Kaltman, 1999:760; Criddle & Butt Mum, 1987:76; Davis et al., 2000:497; Janoff-Bulman, 1997:91; Joseph & Linley, 2005:262; Masten & Wright, 2010:227; Neimeyer, 2002:935; Werner & Smith, 1982:35). For example, younger people's beliefs that create meaning are described as an optimistic belief that circumstances will get better, or that trust can be put in family members or spiritual figures to improve adverse circumstances (Masten & Wright, 2010:227). However, Werner and Smith (1982:35) found that older distressed youth and adults created meaning by having hope that helped them overcome adversity. This hope was occasionally experienced as epiphanies. Criddle and Butt Mum (1987:76) also reported on Victor Frankl's (1946/1984) account of a Cambodian woman in a concentration camp during the Second World War. The woman reported being transformed from feeling despair to being hopeful when she saw a beautiful sunrise and realised that the prison guards did not control the

natural world or the meaning of her existence. Witmer et al. (2001:1) report on how Bosnian refugees' shared experiences of what happened to them allowed them to create shared meaning for their experiences, which aided resilience.

However, individuals sometimes lose their ability to find meaning when their core beliefs about life (e.g. "because life is fair, I will be treated fairly" or "everyone is inherently good") are crushed by traumatic events (Janoff-Bulman, 1992:88). Traumatic events such as the violation of trust (e.g. sexual abuse by someone whom you have a close connection with) are indicated as difficult events from where afflicted individuals have to rebuild meaning and reconstruct positive core beliefs in their lives (Janoff-Bulman & Frantz, 1997:91; Wright et al., 2007:597). Several studies also report that the sooner someone is able to adapt to traumatic events by creating meaning, the better he/she will be able to adjust to the traumatic event. If a person struggles for a prolonged period to find meaning in adversity, he/she might adjust poorly even when he/she finally does find meaning (Silver et al., 1983:81; Wright et al., 2007:597).

Many benefits accrue from the ability to create meaning out of a traumatic event or adverse circumstances. In a study that focused on the growth experienced by survivors of trauma, participants reported that they gained wisdom, compassion for other people, a stronger religious belief and a desire to help others who suffer because they were able to create meaning out of a traumatic event (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995:21). Other benefits that were reported when individuals were able to create meaning in the face of adversity included seeing new potential for one's life, enhancing their social bonds, learning to be thankful for life, and developing intrinsic strength and the ability to tolerate difficulties (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995:21; Wright et al., 2007:597).

Several South African studies recognise meaning making as resilience promoting in adverse circumstances (Barbarin et al., 2000:24; Denis, 2007:37; Dass-Brailsford, 2005:579; Edwards et al., 2005:143; Germann, 2005:39; Kruger & Prinsloo, 2008:241; Malindi & Machenjedze, 2012:72; Pienaar et al., 2006:391; Smukler, 1990:7; Theron et al., 2012:15; Theron, 2013). For example, in Theron's (2013) study, one of the participants adjusted his behaviour through his constructive evaluation of hardship. His positive appraisal of the difficulties he faced helped him to find meaning in life and adjust his life in

a more positive way. Malindi and Machenjedze (2012:72) show in their study on male street youth that educators encouraged learners to have hope for the future by supporting learners to attend school. Having hope for the future encouraged learners to interpret their future positively and to find meaning in setting goals and persevering. Other South African studies offer religious-based practices that support individuals to generate constructive meaning out of hardship. For example, Germann (2005:39) reports that orphans from child-headed households were able to find meaning in difficult circumstances (e.g. poverty and violence) through religious affiliations in their community. Similarly, Denis (2007:37) reports that religious practices such as praying or lighting a candle helped participants to find meaning.

EALCs are well positioned to support learners in developing positive beliefs (such as hope and faith) that will support their meaning making systems (Luthar & Zelazo, 2003:545; Malindi & Machenjedze, 2012:72). They can act as "heroes" in learners' lives by reviving hope after a traumatic event which might in turn encourage learners to act as heroes in their own lives (Kagan, 2009:257). Positive beliefs will help learners to have a sense of purpose for the future that could in turn reinforce a positive identity that allows them to accomplish their goals (Meichenbaum, 2009:186). One strategy is to invite learners to rewrite their life stories in order to give new meaning to bad experiences and to enable them to regain control over their lives (Kagan, 2009:260). According to Skinner and Zimmer-Gembeck (2011:35), learners who are perceived as having high control over their lives are better able to master complex tasks.

Another strategy is for EALCs to search for "real life heroes" (Kagan, 2007:1) in the learner's life that might serve to re-establish a feeling of protection and hope. An example of one such real-life hero in the South African context might be Nelson Mandela, who gave hope to millions by being elected as president in 1994 and helping to end apartheid. Through strategies such as the rewriting of a life story and focusing on real-life heroes, EALCs will be able to help learners to focus on positive aspects of a situation or positive qualities within themselves. Learners might thus be able to identify benefits in distressful situations or find an acceptable reason for why something occurred. For

example, learners could tell themselves that the situation will make them stronger to deal with future dilemmas and might motivate them to work harder to achieve success (Park, 2011:230). Although meaning making can be independent of organised religious affiliations (Zoellner & Maercker, 2006:626), learners and EALCs are more likely to find meaning in adverse circumstances when they are able to be part of supportive affiliations, whether religious based or not (Lee, 2010:643; Masten et al., 2011:111). Supportive affiliations might help individuals to foster hope and meaning in their lives (Kataoka et al., 2006:89; Mollica, 2006:352). EALCs and learners who are supported might be able to rise above problematic circumstances by having positive ambitions for the future (Masten & Wright, 2010:227; Pillay, 2012:172; Veeran & Morgan, 2009:60).

2.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the evolution of the concept of resilience was briefly discussed by explaining the four waves of the study of resilience development. After that, an overview was provided of the concept of the social ecology of resilience that was adapted from Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory. In the last section of the chapter the various protective systems (i.e. attachment relationships, cultural traditions and religion, agency and mastery motivation systems, self-regulation, meaning making, and cognitive competence) most typically reported as universally facilitative of resilience (Masten & Wright, 2010) were described together with comments on how EALCs could harness these for their own resilience and that of their learners.

What Chapter Two did not discuss was how these protective systems might be facilitated, both for learners and for EALCs themselves, when EALCs make use of a resilience-supportive intervention. Many intervention studies have applied components of protective systems in an effort to promote learners' and others' resilience. Most of these studies experimented with ways to enhance protective processes, such as better parenting or meaningful school engagement (see Masten & Wright, 2010:214-215, or Masten et al., 2011:110 for a summary). More recently, researchers have focused on how classroom contexts can be used as intervention sites towards promoting resilience (Song et al., 2013:61-65). However, as noted earlier on, I could not locate studies that reported how

resilience-promoting interventions had been used by lay counsellors (or EALCs) or how such resilience-promoting interventions drew on the basic protective systems that inform positive adjustment. Again, this raised many questions: how might a ready-made intervention promote attachment, self-regulation, cultural and spiritual pathways to resilience, meaning-making, problem solving, and agency and mastery, if at all? Furthermore, how might the strategies (reported in Chapter Two) that EALCs could use to be more competent counsellors be facilitated by an intervention, particularly a bibliotherapeutic intervention that aligned with Africentric culture? How valuable might a ready-made intervention be, both in terms of supporting vulnerable and orphaned learners' resilience? How might using a ready-made intervention support EALCs towards resilient functioning in a work-context that challenged wellbeing? This last question prompts a deeper understanding of the work context of EALCs. Thus, the following chapter will focus on the challenges facing EALCs to provide a rationale for the support of EALCs toward (greater) resilience.

CHAPTER THREE

DEVELOPING RESILIENT EDUCATORS-AS-LAY-COUNSELLORS
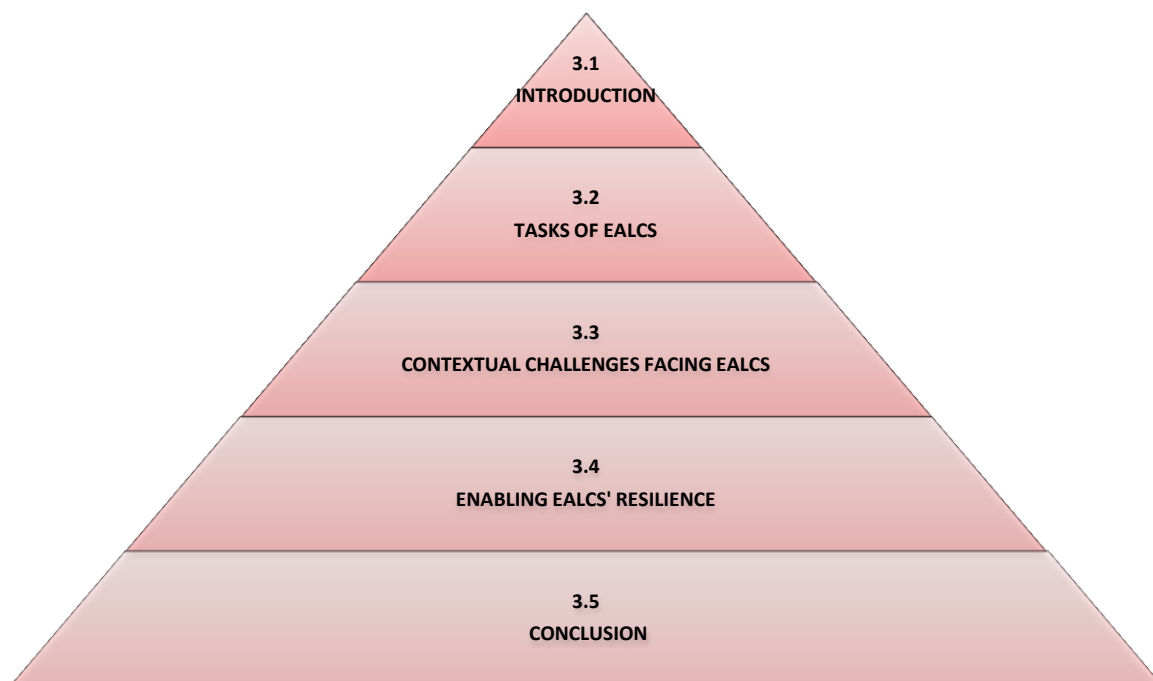
Figure 3.1 Overview of Chapter Three

3.1   INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Chapter Three is to highlight how in the South African context it is woefully inadequate to suggest that educators should become lay counsellors without understanding the complex roles of EALCs and the need to develop their resilience. The chapter firstly provides a review of the tasks of EALCs. Secondly, it give an overview of the multiple contextual challenges facing EALCs as part of the motivation for why it is important to support them towards (greater) resilience. Lastly, the chapter describes how EALCs' resilience can potentially be enabled in the South African context.

This chapter focuses on EALCs, but the literature on lay counsellors and EALCs is thin. Most of the literature refers to school counsellors without specifying if they are registered or not. Thus, for the purpose of the chapter references to an EALC or EALCs and the review of their tasks and challenges are typically based on literature referring to school counsellors. I am aware of

the limitations of this, as well as how impracticable the description of their tasks may sound, given the multiple roles EALCs play.

3.2   TASKS OF EALCS

It is important to start this section by revisiting the definition of an EALC. An EALC is an educator who is not registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) as a registered counsellor, but who fulfils counsellling duties similar to those of registered counsellors in their school environment (Kotler & Kotler, 2007:124) (see also section 1.6.1.2). Thus, by implication, the tasks of an EALC (as outlined later) are in addition to their regular teaching and administrative tasks. This suggests that being an EALC is demanding and challenging.

Although lay counsellors are recognised in the new HPCSA framework (Van Niekerk & Hay, 2009:315), lay counsellors do not fall under the council's direct jurisdiction and therefore the council provides no scope of practice for them (Van Niekerk & Hay, 2009:315). There is therefore no scope of practice for EALCs either. However, the same ethical restrictions that apply to professional registered counsellors should and do also apply to the tasks of lay counsellors (and I in turn assume should apply to EALCs).

The above means that I could find no literature that offers a description of the tasks that EALCs perform. In the section that follows I therefore suggest tasks based on my experience as a counsellor in schools (2006–09), but recognise the limitations of this, including that my suggestions are shaped by my own assumptions (see also section 1.7.1). Some of the tasks suggested below are adapted from the scope of practice for professional registered counsellors (South Africa, 2011; Professional Board for Psychology, 2007). As mentioned in the previous paragraph, no scope of practice is available for EALCs. In my description of EALCs' tasks below I will not only draw on the scope of practice for counsellors provided by the Professional Board of Psychology, the main focus of which is intervention on the individual level, but I will also draw on descriptions of school counsellors' tasks in the international literature and discuss the tasks of EALCs according to a collaborative community viewpoint as recommended by Pederson (2009:143); Pillay (2011a:352) and Pretorius

(2012:509). Pillay (2011a:352) recognises that the scope of practice for counsellors does not fully take into consideration the numerous social problems that the school counsellor is confronted with. For this reason a larger-scale community-intervention approach to an understanding of counsellors' (and, by implication, lay counsellors') tasks is required.

I acknowledge that many more tasks are discussed in the international literature on school counsellors (Barnett, 2010:76; Bland, 2010:211; Davis, 2010:16; Kakacek, 2010:212-213; Kircher, 2007:6–8; Loveless, 2010:31; Nebe, 2010:48; Schayot, 2008:63; Tadlock, 2009:43). I will only focus on the tasks most relevant to the South African context in light of my personal experience and directives in the literature, as noted above. Figure 3.2 gives an overview of EALCs' tasks. Following this, I describe each task.

Figure 3.2 Tasks of EALCs

3.2.1 Executing counselling guidance tasks

In the international literature on the tasks of school counsellors, executing guidance tasks is described as engaging in an ethical, responsible way to develop learners' full educational, personal and social potential (Davis, 2010:16; DoDEA, 2006; Kuhn, 2004:9; NACAC, 2000). In the South African literature (Pillay, 2011a:351; Van Niekerk & Hay, 2009:150) and in the scope of practice for professional counsellors (South Africa, 2011; Professional Board of

Psychology, 2007), guidance tasks are described as core competencies that include basic psychological assessment, intervention, referral expertise, research and practice management. However, professional counsellors are not allowed to conduct assessments or implement interventions that require specialised skills that their basic training did not provide (South Africa, 2011; Professional Board of Psychology, 2007; Van Niekerk & Hay, 2009:150). In the words of Van Niekerk and Hay (2009:150):

> It is important to note that more specialised assessment procedures, such as neuropsychological assessment, the use of projective assessment techniques, and measures used for the diagnosis of psychopathology are excluded from the core competencies of registered counsellors.

In a recent publication of the HPCSA (2013:58) it is recommended that the tasks of professional counsellors should mostly focus on community contexts (e.g. schools, police, orphanages and NGOs), as opposed to individual therapeutic interventions. The role of professional counsellors is described by the HPCSA (2013:58) as that of "emotional paramedics" who have to intervene when necessary and refer where possible. Furthermore, professional counsellors are meant to be a resource in communities who will intervene in a culturally appropriate manner using preventative and developmental interventions. This applies even more to EALCs without formal training in counselling. Thus, EALCs are not supposed to engage in therapeutic interventions, but rather to be mediators between learners and needed resources. I wish to emphasise that because few EALCs are formally trained as professional counsellors, they cannot act as professional counsellors. I recognise this restriction on the role of EALCs throughout my thesis. I also suggest that EALCs should receive formal training in community-counselling skills, as is already done at some universities.

Given the South African reality of too few school counsellors and of educators subsequently needing to function as lay counsellors, the latter often have to fulfil guidance tasks that include basic supportive counselling, particularly when children are in urgent need of support, i.e. they act as "emotional paramedics"

(HPCSA, 2013:58). As already noted, they perform these tasks outside a formal scope of practice, but this does not negate the importance of their needing to work ethically. In university courses, such as the North-West University's (NWU) B.Ed. Honours module entitled "Facilitation and lay counselling for educators", educators have an opportunity to develop very basic counselling skills that can support their functioning as lay counsellors in school contexts. This development includes the following knowledge and skills (Kitching, 2012:v):

- EALCs are equipped with basic knowledge and skills that will enable them "to support learners who need guidance or who experience life problems, and refer those learners who are in need of specialised counselling".

- EALCs are also equipped "to identify a range of emotional and social problems in children and adolescents as barriers to learning, to refer those learners who are in need of specialised counselling or therapy and to provide support".

- EALCs are also enabled to "demonstrate knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding the provision of support from an eco-systemic approach".

From the above it is clear that EALCs are not permitted to conduct formal assessments or to provide extended or specialised therapies. However, they are expected to support and guide learners to function well.

NWU is not the only university to train educators to act as lay counsellors. The University of the Free State and the University of Pretoria, among others, offer similar courses. For example, the University of the Free State has a course entitled "Therapeutic skills" for second-year honours students in education. This module aims to assist educators to acquire basic helping skills in order to assist learners and to refer learners to professionals when needed to.

For EALCs in the South African school context the skills taught in modules such as the ones referred to above mean that educators have some capacity to provide learners with basic supportive counselling guidance that includes, for example, help with study methods, inter- and intra-personal skills, and conflict

and stress management. EALCs are also expected to work collaboratively within an ecosystemic approach to provide the necessary psychological and material support to learners or to facilitate learners' access to such support. As such, I conclude that EALCs' tasks are similar to those set out in the international literature referred to above, namely that school counsellors are tasked with developing learners' full educational, personal and social potential (Davis, 2010:16; DoDEA, 2006; Kuhn, 2004:9; NACAC, 2000).

According to the Professional Board of Psychology (2007), registered counsellors need to refer their clients to psychologists, social workers or any other professional when a problem is beyond the scope of their practice. The same applies to EALCS, perhaps even more so than for registered counsellors, who have formal counselling training: EALCs are thus duty bound to refer to professionals when they are unable to deal with a particular problem (Professional Board of Psychology, 2007; Van Niekerk & Hay, 2009:150) and are specifically trained to understand and respect this imperative (Kitching, 2012:2). However, referring might prove to be difficult because of a lack of professionals such as psychologists or because of limited finance, poverty, HIV/AIDS and political agendas (Pillay, 2003:261; 2007:105). Nevertheless, EALCs needs to familiarise themselves with accessible professionals in the school's wider community. This implies the need to establish a sound referral network and that EALCs should know the processes for referral in their school's community (Dockrat, 1999:44; Pillay, 2003:261; 2007:105; 2011a:351).

Researching issues found in difficult cases and possible intervention strategies could be valuable resources if EALCs are working in a context that offers no or a very limited referral network. EALCs might be the only people able to provide support in their school context, especially if no other professional resources are available for referral (Visser, 2007a:15). In such instances it is EALCs' ethical duty to provide the best possible care, but without going beyond the scope of their training, much like the ethical duty of trained counsellors to provide quality care without going beyond what they are trained to do (Gray & Barnekow, 2006:35; Prilleltensky, 2002:95; Visser, 2007a:15).

In summary, offering counselling and providing guidance are core EALC tasks that could be challenging for EALCs. The challenges are likely to increase if EALCs are under-trained or without professional referral networks.

3.2.2 Implementing community-based action research

Community-based action research is an important part of EALCs' responsibilities, partly because they cannot support learners at risk if the communities from which such learners come are not supported toward positive change, and partly because mental health practitioners, counsellors and lay counsellors are mandated to serve their communities (DOE, 2011). Community-based action research is "a flexible spiral process of systemic enquiry" (Costello, 2011:6). This step-by-step process starts with counsellors (in this case EALCs) and a community representative working together to understand problems of interest to learners and the school community. After researchers (or, in this case, EALCs) and their community partners understand the problematic issues within the school community through systemic reflection, interventions aimed at supporting and improving the school community are carried out collaboratively with the community. Interventions are then evaluated and changed (if necessary) by EALCs and community partners to improve practice (Bell, 2005:8; Burgess et al., 2006:60; Coghlan & Brannick, 2005:4; Coleman, 2007:484; Costello, 2011:6; Heath & Hudnall, 2011:115; Hopkins, 2008:47; Kakacek, 2010:212; McNiff & Whitehead, 2011:3; McTaggart, 2012:34; Phillips & Carr, 2010:253; Piggot-Irvine, 2012:122; Stringer & Beadle, 2012:43; Wood, 2012).

For EALCs community based action research potentially facilitates a helpful process where EALCs together with communities identify possible problems of interest for learners and the school community that needs to be investigated; collaboratively think of possible solutions and implement the most appropriate solution in collaboration with key stakeholders (Pillay, 2006:185; Pillay & Nesengani, 2006:131) The process continues with EALCs together with communities evaluating the possible solution and finally change the policy of the school or change the school practice in light of the evaluation with the collaboration of the community (Bell, 2005:8; Burgess et al., 2006:60; Coghlan & Brannick, 2005:4; Coleman, 2007:484; Costello, 2011:6; Heath & Hudnall,

2011:115; Hopkins, 2008:47; Kakacek, 2010:212) In this way EALCs can align their tasks with the HPCSA (2013:58) recommendations pertaining to professional counsellors pursuing a community focus.

In what follows I provide a brief review of the action research process, with emphasis on the following actions: executing a collaborative needs assessment, developing collaborative partnerships, advocating for change and developing contextually relevant interventions. I do this to clarify how each step of the process spells out tasks for the EALC and how these tasks can be quite challenging to fulfil. Thus, although Pillay (2011a:352) and others (Pederson, 2009:143; Pretorius, 2012:509) urge a community focus for (school) counsellors, it is important to understand that this translates into multiple demanding tasks for EALCs.

3.2.2.1 Executing a collaborative needs assessment

Together with the community in question, EALCs need to do a needs assessment to address the unique characteristics and preferences of the community, as well as to determine the needs of a particular school context (Annandale, 2006; DoDEA, 2006; Heath et al., 2009:361; NACAC, 2000; Pillay, 2006:185; 2012:167). One of the principles that EALCs should apply when undertaking an effective needs assessment includes developing an understanding of the history and culture of the school and community so as to be able to implement effective interventions (Van Niekerk & Hay, 2009:423; Veeran & Morgan, 2009:55). Masten (2011:503) stresses the importance of including partners in the needs assessment phase who are experts on the culture of the school and community. A community-based environment is not singular or stable, but evolves according to cultural practices (Pillay, 2011a:352). These cultural practices are intertwined partly within the biology of individuals, partly within the South African community, and partly with historical practices and experiences (Lee, 2010:653). This complexity adds to the challenge of needs-assessment.

EALCs might need to hold interviews with internal and external stakeholders to determine the challenges within the school and community context (Mitcham et al., 2009:479; Pillay, 2006:185; 2012:167). Internal stakeholders include, for

example, parents, educators, the governing body of the school, learners, the school management team and the school-based support team. The external stakeholders include, for example, the district office, the Department of Social Services, the Department of Health, NGOs, academic institutions, churches and the South African Police Service (Gray & Barnekow, 2006:35; Helleve et al., 2011:13; Pillay, 2006:185; 2012:167; Prilleltensky, 2002:95; Visser, 2007a:15). When the challenges facing the school have been fully explored and identified, an action plan should be created by the EALC for an intervention in collaboration with the various stakeholders (Pillay, 2006:185; 2012:167).

3.2.2.2 Developing collaborative partnerships

Research supports the notion that when school counsellors develop trusting collaborative partnerships with members of the community, they will be able to intervene more effectively (DoEA, 2006; Heath & Hudnall, 2011:115; Kakacek, 2010:212; Pillay, 2006:186; Tadlock, 2009:43). I assume the same to be true of EALCs. Various innovative examples can be found within the literature to explain how collaborative partnerships can be involved in supporting counsellors (and by implication EALCs) in their quest for change (Gray & Barnekow, 2006:35; Helleve et al., 2011:13; Luthar & Zelazo, 2003:537; Prilleltensky, 2002:95; Visser, 2007a:15). For example, the Department of Health can provide medical support for learners and educators in need of treatment (e.g. for HIV/AIDS) and HIV counselling (Gray & Barnekow, 2006:35; Pillay, 2006:185). Furthermore, the Department of Social Services provides grants for parents of learners affected by illness as a result of AIDS. Religious organisations could also provide nutritional care for learners with AIDS (Gray & Barnekow, 2006:35; Pillay, 2006:185). Educators can be involved by incorporating topics of social concern into the curriculum and class discussions (Gray & Barnekow, 2006:35; Helleve et al., 2011:13; Luthar & Zelazo, 2003:537).

Masten (2011:503) highlights the benefits to the resilience of communities when there is a collaborative relationship among multiple partners. There is a growing discussion on incorporating knowledge from multiple disciplines (i.e. biological, social, communication, organisational and large-scale ecosystem sciences) to

build resilient communities (Masten et al., 2011:114; Sapienza & Masten, 2011:271; Thornberg, 2012:314). If EALCs learn to collaborate with people from different disciplines they are bound to derive benefits that will make their EALC tasks manageable and of benefit to their learners. For example, collaborations with psychologists, social workers, special-needs educators and NGOs with a mental-health focus could have positive consequences for learners, such as improved academic development, reduced aggression, diminished substance abuse (Brown & Bolen, 2008:28) and less absenteeism from school (Gall et al., 2000:292; Thornberg, 2012:314).

Even though collaboration with multiple disciplines can provide many advantages, several obstacles have also been recorded that service providers have to overcome (Thornberg, 2012:315). From personal experience as a school counsellor, I assume that these are applicable to EALCs too.

- Obstacles arise as a result of educators, learners and parents being sceptical regarding professionals outside of the school context and thus rejecting collaborative support with such professionals. These professionals are aware of this kind of scepticism and tend to avoid having to deal with sceptical people (Robinson, 2002:185; Spratt et al., 2006:391).

- Educators, learners and parents feel intimidated when trying new types of interventions (Farrell et al., 2009:821).

- Professionals outside of the school context might not respect educators or even EALCs and might not involve them in the intervention process (Robinson, 2002:185; Slonski-Fowler & Truscott, 2004:1).

- Educators with whom EALCs wish to collaborate are probably overworked and do not have the time to fit interventions into their schedules (Robinson, 2002:185).

- Parents are sometimes not involved in the process of interventions, as would be expected. One reason for this is that parents are not respected for the contribution they can make and are not asked to be involved in interventions. Another reason is that some parents show a lack of interest in such interventions (Klingner & Harry, 2006:2247).

- Another obstacle is known as "social loafing" (Thornberg, 2012:334), which is a decrease in productivity when people work together in a group, as opposed to people who work on their own. EALCs might have to work collaboratively with others who practise social loafing and this might hinder the intervention process (Forsyth, 2006:297–304; Hogg & Vaughan, 2008:544; Thornberg, 2012:334).

- The process known as "free riding" (Thornberg, 2012:334) might also create obstacles for EALCs wanting to collaborate with members of other professions. Free riding means that some individuals might not contribute to the intervention as much as others because they believe that the others will do all the work. When an intervention achieves a positive outcome, the free riders nevertheless take credit for this positive outcome, even though they did not contribute to the intervention as much as they could have (Forsyth, 2006:231–34; Hogg & Vaughan, 2008: 278–83; Thornberg, 2012:334).

- The final example of an obstacle is "diffusion of responsibility" (Thornberg, 2012:334). When individuals diffuse responsibility they operate with the assumption that someone else will take responsibility for the task at hand. EALCs might find it difficult to execute interventions if people do not take responsibility for their part in the interventions (Forsyth, 2006:297–304; Hogg & Vaughan, 2008:544; Thornberg, 2012:334).

There are ways to overcome the above obstacles. Thornberg (2012:332) offers the following advice, which I take to be applicable to EALCs and their task of developing collaborative partnerships:

- Every person involved in the intervention must be able to set the goals needed for it to be successful.

- Every person involved should take responsibility for their part in the intervention.

- Also, good professional relationships should be formed by those involved in interventions.

3.2.2.3 Advocating for change

In order to collaborate effectively with members of other professions, school counsellors (and, by default, EALCs) have to be innovative and must be able to take charge as "advocates for change" (as cited by various authors) in their community (Davis, 2010:16; Dixon et al., 2010:103; Kakecek, 2010:202; Kircher, 2007:6; Kuhn, 2004:9; Mitcham et al., 2009:465; NACAC, 2000; Schayot, 2008:63; Shillingford & Lambie, 2010:208; Suero-Duran, 2010:134).

Forbes (2004:69) summarises the role of the school counsellor as an "advocate for change" in the school context community in the following statement:

> The role of the school counsellor today is to promote the whole development of all school community members as well as that of the school community itself. By whole development I mean not only the advancement of cognitive, intellectual, and academic abilities but also emotional, moral, social, spiritual, physical, and aesthetic ones. All community members mean teachers, administrators, parents, and staff as well as every student. And by school community I mean the entire school culture as a living organism, including the quality of its relationships.

In other words, EALCs advocate for change when they partner with community stakeholders (from learners through to parents and school staff) to promote resilient school communities. These partnerships promote multiple, positive changes for all members of the community. Although this task is a very demanding one – perhaps even more so for EALCs, who also carry out regular

teaching and administrative tasks – it is important for EALCs to honour the task of advocating for change.

As part of advocating for whole school change, several authors encourage counsellors (among whom I include EALCs) to specifically advocate for the rights of underprivileged learners and to enable parents of these leaners to access resources for empowerment (Bemak & Cornely, 2002:322; Kiselica & Robinson, 2001:387; Lee, 2005:184). Authors such as Bryan (2005:219) and Bemak and Conyne (2004:195) draw attention to the influence that school counsellors can have on accessing and mobilising/providing resources for learners and their parents. School counsellors have an understanding of their school community and can thus influence stakeholders to participate or mobilise resources for learners.

EALCs wishing to advocate for change for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds could draw on the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA, 2004) guidelines for how school counsellors can do this. These include removing challenges that hinder learner's development; generating opportunities for learning for learners; exposing learners to an enriching school curriculum; partnering with people inside and outside of the school in order to meet the needs of learners; and promoting positive systemic change in schools. EALCs could attempt to fulfil similar tasks, but the fact that they are both educators and part-time counsellors could make it difficult to achieve these recommended goals.

Another way in which EALCs can function as change agents is by being mediators in the school community. International research supports the notion of school counsellors being mediators between educators, parents, other school staff and community resources (Bland, 2010:211; Davis, 2010:16; DoDEA, 2006). This also implies being able to develop high-risk learners' academic capabilities and supporting them to develop social skills and an awareness of behaviour that could be destructive within the larger system (Sink, 2004:309). In this way EALCs could mediate adaptive skills for these learners. Again, this is a tall order.

The South African literature also confirms that school counsellors (whom I assume also include EALCs) can be advocates for change and will benefit from acquiring multiple skills that will enable them to collaborate with members of the school community and outsiders (Pillay, 2006:186; 2012:167; Van Niekerk & Hay, 2009:423). For example, Pillay (2006:186) suggests that counsellors (again, I assume this applies to EALCs) should acquire skills such as organising, negotiating, networking, communicating, problem assessment and problem solving that will allow them to collaborate with members of the community. In Pillay's (2012:167) words, this would mean that EALCs should be "open, approachable, have integrity, be trustworthy, resolve conflict and make good use of internal and external support within the context of the school". In these ways EALCs could adapt their services to the needs of their school communities and work collaboratively to advocate for change.

3.2.2.4 Developing contextually relevant interventions

An intervention attempts to address specific problems in a school or to prevent identified problems from developing or escalating (Barnett, 2010:76). The American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2005) and other authors (Barnett, 2010:76; DoDEA, 2006; Nebe, 2010:48; Owens et al., 2011:168; Tadlock, 2009:43) recommend that intervention strategies should include programmes teaching life skills that address academic achievement, personal and social development, and career planning. For example, school counsellors could address aspects such as self-esteem, being bullied, academic difficulties and goal setting. Thus, part of the tasks of EALCs (inferred from the description of school counsellor's tasks) is that they should work with their school communities to develop interventions that suit the context and needs of their community. Given the multiple tasks that EALCs have to complete, I would suggest that they could also identify and use existing interventions that would suit the contexts in which they provide their services (hence, the aim of my study – see section 1.3).

It is important that EALCs develop their own interventions or choose from existing interventions with care, because interventions are not universally applicable. It is thus recommended that interventions should be clearly planned,

effective and culturally appropriate to ensure that communities become self-reliant (Davis, 2010:16; Heath et al., 2009:365). Interventions should also address social issues (e.g. HIV/AIDS, poverty, violence, crime and substance abuse) that are locally relevant and where possible aim to prevent such issues from continuing to place learners and their communities at risk (Pillay, 2011a:352; 2012:167). Furthermore, interventions should be developed to help learners relate to members of the community who demonstrate positive cultural identities. Learners should also be encouraged through interventions that are developed to cater for specific cultural needs to participate in communities who encourage a positive cultural identity (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007:341).

Over the years there has been a shift from individual psychotherapy to contextually relevant intervention services, particularly in Third World countries such as South Africa (Pederson, 2009:143; Pillay, 2011a:352). This shift is due to the changing social, political, economic and psychological issues facing communities and schools. International studies highlight the importance of focusing on and developing various culturally relevant interventions in the school context that include local or indigenous culturally aligned ways of, for example, influencing family resilience, improving the academic achievement of learners, having an impact on poverty and empowering low-income households (Blanchett, 2006:24; Flores & Heppner, 2002:181; Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005:207; Mitcham et al., 2009:467; Sue & Sue, 2003:3). The implication of EALCs being culturally relevant when designing or using interventions and collaborating with school communities in this design (see section 3.2.2) is that the results of interventions will reflect the particular culture of the context, or, if applicable to a given school context, a more homogenised universally shared culture, possibly flowing from commonalities of human experience across the globe (Ungar, 2011:8).

When the various social intervention strategies have been implemented, the EALC and community members need to evaluate together whether the original social problem has been satisfactorily impacted. If the results indicate little impact, then the process of community-based action research should restart from the beginning to determine if another intervention is more applicable. If the intervention is found to be useful, but in need of refinement, then the EALC and

community members can adjust their intervention according to what has been established through the evaluation (Pillay, 2006:185). The findings of the evaluation should also help to develop a self-sustaining school by influencing policy and standards implementation (Dockrat, 1999:44; Luthar & Zelazo, 2003:543).

3.2.3 Summary

In summary, EALCs have no scope of practice to guide their tasks. To serve their school communities, EALCs generally need to be "emotional paramedics" (HPCSA, 2013:58) as they provide guidance. They also need to work with their school communities in ways that resemble action research to partner with learners, parents, other staff and school community members to encourage learner and community well-being and resilience. As has often been suggested in this (and other) chapters, these tasks are demanding, hence my contention that EALCs need support toward being resilient and effective service providers.

3.3   CONTEXTUAL CHALLENGES FACING EALCS

The tasks discussed above are difficult to carry out, not just because they are demanding and probably compete with educators' teaching and administrative tasks, but also because of the many contextual challenges facing EALCs. For this reason EALCs need support in fulfilling these tasks and overcoming the contextual challenges described in this section.

EALCs are part of the broader socioecological system (see section 2.3), which implies that they are also part of and are affected by the various challenges in the South African system (e.g. economic and psychosocial challenges) (Donald et al., 2004:47; 2010:267; Gibson et al., 2010:30). Ironically, being part and parcel of their socioecological systems could imply that EALCS might contribute to systemic challenges, but further consideration of this is beyond the scope of my study. For the purposes of the study I take the stance that the challenges integral to South Africa's socioecological systems have the potential to hamper EALCs' resilience (Donald et al., 2010:267).

Figure 3.3 offers a visual overview of two of the contextual challenges facing EALCs, i.e. the challenges of poverty for South African learners and schools,

and psycho-social challenges associated with the HIV/AIDS epidemic. I use these contextual challenges as a framework to explain the challenges subsequently facing EALCs in the school context, i.e. inadequate training for diversity, heavy workload and burnout, and inadequate recognition for counsellors. I am aware that there are multiple other contextual and school-based challenges, but I have confined my focus to challenges associated with poverty and psychosocial challenges associated with the HIV/AIDS epidemic because of my personal experiences as a counsellor in the school context (see section 4.3.5) and because of my students' experiences as EALCs in their school contexts.

The challenges of poverty for South African learners and schools & psychosocial challenges associated with the HIV/AIDS epidemic

Inadequate recognition for counsellors

Heavy workload & burnout

Inadequate training to deal with diversity
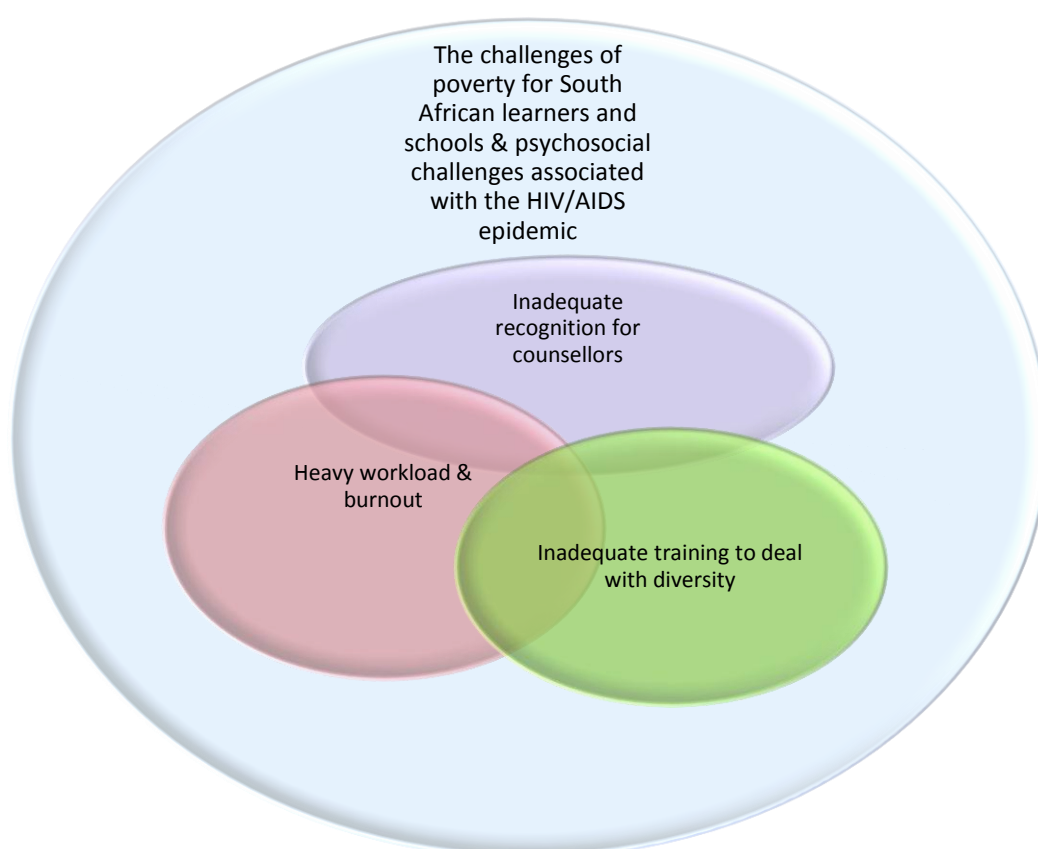
Figure 3.3 Some contextual challenges facing EALCs

3.3.1 Some South African contextual challenges faced by EALCs

As noted above, in this section I will focus on the challenges associated with poverty and psychosocial challenges associated with the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and how these affect learners and EALCS.

3.3.1.1 The challenges of poverty for South African learners and schools

Almost two-thirds of South African children live in households with a monthly income of under R575 per month and over a third of children live in households where no adult is employed. Over two million children live in backyards or informal dwellings and a third of children do not have drinking water at their home (Hall et al., 2012:12). Among the many negative effects of poverty, it is associated with dysfunctional homes, poor role models, violence, crime, lack of school necessities and disabilities (because of a lack of medical care) (Ahmed et al., 2009:48, Donald et al., 2010:156; Pillay & Nesengani, 2006:131). Understandably, poverty and its associated negative effects impact negatively on some aspects of the South African education system (Ahmed et al., 2009:48; Donald et al., 2010:156; Pillay & Nesengani, 2006:131; Nkosi, 2012; Nkosi & John, 2012). For example, in a study of previously disadvantaged South African schools, Johnson and Lazarus (2008:27) found that largely because of the impoverishment of communities, South African learners from disadvantaged communities were engaging in at-risk behaviours (e.g. using illegal substances) and lacked the necessary external assets (e.g. a supportive family) and internal assets (e.g. motivation) to function resiliently. Additional consequences of poverty for education can include poor academic achievement, negative attitudes among educators working in low-income areas and frustrated by the lack of resources in impoverished schools, inadequate life skills among learners and decreased school attendance (Ahmed et al., 2009:48, Pillay & Nesengani, 2006:131).

Poverty increases the need for counselling. There is an increasing need for learners to be taught life skills to prevent absenteeism from school and to be resilient, but also for educators and EALCS to deal with the consequences of poverty within schools. Thus, poverty places stress on EALCs who work in under-resourced school systems with vulnerable learners and their families and who are pressured to fulfil counselling needs that increase every year (Ahmed et al., 2009:48, Pillay & Nesengani, 2006:131).

Furthermore, socioeconomic risks lead to under-resourced schools and government's failure to make up the deficit because there are so many needy

schools (Van Niekerk & Hay, 2009:400). Because schools have to cope with being under-resourced, there are almost no funds in most schools for the provision of counselling services (Cook et al., 2010:456). The result is that schools have to use their limited finances to provide necessities (i.e. food, clothes and learning materials) to learners instead of providing emotional support (Bicego et al., 2003:1235; Bray, 2003:39; Condly, 2006:211). Jimerson et al. (2009:560) estimated the number of professional psychologists in South African schools to be 1,178. This is roughly one psychologist for every 8,916 school-going learners. Most South African schools do not have the financial resources to be able to employ full-time registered psychologists or counsellors (Verrijdt, 2012).

Cook et al. (2010:456) report that access to professional psychologists is more likely in developed countries. Developed countries possibly have a higher regard for the importance of professional psychologists, because these countries have more stable economies and emancipated worldviews (Cook et al., 2010:456). South Africa is still a developing country and thus access to professional psychologists in schools might be regarded as less important in light of all the economic barriers outlined above. Furthermore, there are well-documented plans for district-based support teams to offer counselling support, but in reality this has not worked well (see Verrijdt, 2012). The result is that parents have to seek professional help outside of the school system, which many cannot afford (Verrijdt, 2012). Still, there is a need for professional psychologists or counsellors to help parents and learners to handle issues like HIV/AIDS, poverty, alcohol and drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, rape, and family violence (John, 2012; Van Niekerk & Hay, 2009:400).

In summary, poverty leads to under-resourced schools, which impacts EALCs negatively. The unavailability of professional psychologists means that educators have to fulfil learners' emotional needs (I assume the same applies to EALCs) and assume the role of counsellor. Furthermore, educators (and, by implication, EALCs) are burdened by the poverty and other challenges facing their learners (Theron, 2009:231). The burden of the schools' needs is placed on staff at the schools (which typically applies to EALCs), many of whom are

inexperienced or inadequately trained to cope with the challenges that their learners face (Pillay, 2003:261; 2007:105).

3.3.1.2 Psychosocial challenges associated with the HIV/AIDS epidemic

It was estimated that 122,000 educators in sub-Saharan Africa were HIV-positive (World Bank, 2008). This high incidence affected the education system negatively, because of educators dying, inexperienced educators replacing them and fewer children coming to school because of HIV/AIDS (Khanare, 2012:251; Theron, 2005:56; Van Rooyen & Van Den Berg, 2009:81). The disease has an influence on educators' ability to function effectively at work and learners' ability to learn. Educators challenged by an HIV-postive status struggle to fulfil their obligations to their schools and learners. For example, educators who are HIV-infected may struggle to perform basic duties such as teaching academic content, not to mention having the energy to cope with demanding circumstances such as being able to care for learners with learning or personal problems (Louw et al., 2009:205; Machawira & Pillay, 2009:758–60). These same educators have to deal with various emotional traumas that include feelings of loneliness, regret, fear, anger, blame, shock and denial, often without the necessary emotional support from their school communities due to the stigmatisation of people with HIV (Levers et al., 2011:58; Machawira & Pillay, 2009:758–60). Colleagues of educators with HIV have to deal with seeing the latter declining in function and, should the disease not be well managed, eventually dying. Following the death of an HIV-positive educator, surviving colleagues and EALCs have to cope with the loss of that educator. This loss potentially hinders both overall learning effectiveness in the school and the well-being of these affected individuals. Thus, partly because of this legacy of HIV/AIDS, school communities can no longer depend on healthy learners, stable families, competent educators and a stable economy for resources (Levers et al., 2011:58; Machawira & Pillay, 2009:758–60).

Not only does this epidemic influence the educators with HIV, but HIV also influences learners with the disease. The prevalence of a HIV-positive status among 15–24-year-olds in South Africa was found to be 10.2% (Ahmed et al., 2009:48). Learners who are HIV-infected cannot always receive an education

because they are too sick to go to school. Even if learners are able to go to school, if the needs (social, psychological or physical) associated with the HIV epidemic are not addressed, they might be a barrier to learning (Khanare, 2012:251; Van Niekerk & Hay, 2009:322).

The results of a South African study carried out by Bicego et al. (2003:1235) indicated that orphans struggle with their educational grade level more than non-orphans; thus orphanhood has an effect on the educational development of the orphan. Many black South African orphans' learning capabilities and emotional well-being are reduced because of stressors in the environment and they need academic and social support from EALCs in order to keep up with the academic and emotional development of their peers (Bhargava, 2005:263; Ebersohn & Eloff, 2002:77; Khanare, 2012:251; Theron, 2008a). However, EALCs often do not have the skills to provide the academic and social support that learners need.

With the country's rate of unemployment as high as 24% (Statistics South Africa, 2010), even orphans who do have caretakers are often left to their own devices because caretakers are sometimes not able to provide the necessary resources because of unemployment or because they themselves are HIV-infected (Atwine et al., 2005:555; Betancourt et al., 2013:423; Daniel & Mathias, 2012:191; Skovdal & Daniel, 2012:153). This and orphans without caregivers leads to youth-headed households where learners affected by HIV-infected caregivers have to provide for themselves (Evans, 2012:177; Skovdal & Ogutu, 2012:241). Most of the time learners from youth-headed households also drop out of school to earn money for their siblings and are struggling with poverty and uncertainty regarding their future (Betancourt et al., 2013:423). This complicates EALCs' tasks because they are confronted by learners' struggle to survive at the most basic level, let alone attain an education.

Orphans and learners whose parents are HIV-infected are not just affected financially. Their psychosocial well-being is impacted and so learners affected by parents who are HIV-infected also need emotional support (Van Dijk & Van Driel, 2012:283). Learners affected by HIV are often stigmatised, homeless,

abused and suffering from emotional distress (Lee, 2012:165; Van der Brug, 2012:273). This might affect the mental health of learners and lead to at-risk behaviour such as drug abuse and teenage pregnancy (Betancourt et al., 2013:423). Learners who have lost or are losing a parent also have to cope with grief, insecurity and loneliness while facing the many social challenges of being orphaned (Thamuku & Daniel, 2012:215; Van Dijk & Van Driel, 2012:283). As a result, many orphans suffer from depression and a sense of hopelessness (Betancourt et al., 2013:423). Understandably, these pressing needs mean that EALCs who work with such learners will need to cope with their complicated grief and psychosocial needs.

If they are enabled or have adequate resources, schools are often a valuable resource for enhancing the well-being of orphaned or vulnerable learners (Brooks, 2006:69; Morrison & Allen, 2007:162; Stewart et al., 2004:26). Often, schools are the only resource orphaned and vulnerable learners can rely on (Pillay, 2011b:10).This means that EALCs (like counsellors in better-resourced schools) will often have to provide or mobilise resources to support the physiological, emotional and social needs of these learners, and find ways to enhance their psychological resilience, in part by shaping the learners' sense of control over their lives (Brooks, 2006:69; Morrison & Allen, 2007:162; Stewart et al., 2004:26). Pillay's study (2011b:10) with learners from child-headed households emphasised the potentially protective role (and implied adaptive system) of schools if these children are to cope adaptively with risk factors. In a South African study that explored academic achievement among disadvantaged black youth, results indicated that black learners who achieved success in the school context had, among other protective resources, good relationships with their educators and relied on the example of their educators who came from similar backgrounds to their own to remind them that it is possible to triumph over adversity (Dass-Brailsford, 2005:574).

However, as pointed out above, educators and EALCs do not always have access to the resources that they need to be optimally supportive to learners affected by HIV. There are studies that show the willingness of South African educators to support their school communities in dealing with HIV (Ferreira,

Ebersöhn & Odendaal, 2010:101), even though educators sometimes perceive themselves as not having the necessary tools to support their school communities and then refrain from being proactive in their communities (Ferreira, Ebersöhn & Odendaal, 2010:101; Mpofu et al., 2011:116). I assume that the same challenge is true for EALCs wanting to provide support to their school communities facing HIV (Louw et al., 2009:205; Van Rooyen & Van Den Berg, 2009:81).

In summary, HIV potentiates an obstacle for EALCs, partly because of the continued social crisis resulting from the high incidence of HIV-infection among educators, learners and their parents (Louw et al., 2009:205; Theron, 2009:231). This social crisis affects the whole school system. When EALCs do not have the necessary resources or support to deal with the escalating case loads of social and emotional problems related to HIV, then they are placed at risk. Thus, given the reality of HIV in South Africa, it becomes even more necessary to support school counsellors (Louw et al., 2009:205; Theron, 2009:231).

3.3.2 School contextual challenges facing EALCs

It is apparent from the previous section that the challenges associated with poverty and HIV spill over into schools. This in turn could become a burdensome responsibility for EALCs and something that could challenge their capacity to function resiliently. In addition to these problems, there are often school-based challenges that complicate EALCs' tasks further. In this section I focus on a few challenges facing EALCs in the school context. Because of my personal experience in this context and related literature I will focus on the difficulty of working in a multicultural context with EALCs who are inadequately trained to deal with diversity, EALCs who have a heavy workload and experience burnout, and inadequate recognition of counsellors (Pillay, 2011a:351–62).

3.3.2.1 Inadequate training to deal with diversity

The South African context consists of diverse cultures, races, religions, socioeconomic classes, disabilities, sexual orientations, behaviours, lifestyles,

values and beliefs that require counsellors (and, I assume, EALCs) to be adaptive and flexible (Du Preez & Roos 2008:699; Pillay, 2011a:351). This diversity translates into learners with diverse experiences, belief systems and needs. This is a challenge when EALCs do not understand how to cater for the diverse needs of learners (Dahir, 2009:3; Portman, 2009:21). International studies recognise the difficulty of working in a multicultural context with insufficient multicultural knowledge and training, especially in terms of managing diverse group dynamics in the classroom (DeLorme, 2010:100; Kakacek, 2010:209; Schayot, 2008:113; Sweeney, 2009:44; Uwah, 2008:47). Similarly, local studies confirm the difficulty of educators and counsellors working with diverse learners in schools (Diale & Fritz, 2007:223; Du Preez & Roos 2008:699; Pillay, 2011a:351).

Cultural competence is necessary for EALCs to function competently in multicultural contexts (Mitcham et al., 2009:474). According to Ungar (2011:8), to be culturally competent means to take into consideration how individuals and groups make their common values, beliefs, language and customs plain in what they do everyday (Corey, 2001:133; Landsberg et al., 2005:222). It is expected that educators should understand and be sensitive to the complexity of teaching and supporting learners in a multicultural setting, respect learners' ethnic cultural history, and be able to communicate in a culturally appropriate way (Bondy et al. 2007:326; Dahir, 2009:3; Lee, 2001:134–36; Portman, 2009:21). I assume this applies equally to EALCs. What is more, working with learners from diverse backgrounds, with a range of life experiences and support and scholastic needs can be stressful for EALCs if they lack cultural knowledge and contextually relevant training (Diale & Fritz, 2007:223; Schellenberg & Grothaus, 2009:440).

Part of being culturally competent is the ability to acknowledge and use relevant community structures and traditions, such as incorporating indigenous rituals and spiritual practices (see section 2.4.2.1) into interventions (Barbarin et al., 2000:24; Denis, 2007:37; Dass-Brailsford, 2005:579; Edwards et al., 2005:143; Germann, 2005:39; Heath et al., 2009:350; Kruger & Prinsloo, 2008:241; Pienaar et al., 2006:391; Smukler, 1990:7; Theron et al., 2012:15). Canada et al. (2007:12) and Kemple et al. (2006:34) reported in their studies that

competent school counsellors emphasised the importance of effective communication when talking to learners who speak a language other than English. Their studies emphasised the importance of preparing interventions in the learners' home language and respecting learners' cultural and social needs. Walker (2001:315) also noted that when people perceive that educators/counsellors disregard their community or traditional cultural values, it influences their overall satisfaction with supportive services. If EALCs do not understand their communities' cultural values or cannot communicate effectively with learners who have a different mother tongue, this could have a negative impact on the effectiveness of supportive interventions. Because of inadequate multicultural knowledge, skills, awareness and ability to exhibit cultural competence, it can be a challenge for EALCs to meet all the aforementioned expectations and carry out the recommendations made by the aforementioned authors (Butler-Byrd et al., 2006:378; Tadlock, 2009:25).

To be more culturally competent and contextually relevant, it would be helpful for EALCs to engage in critical self-reflection to examine personal biases and assumptions, understand cultural values, and show openness to other cultures (Mertens, 2009:106). It is also important for EALCs to be familiar with the diverse contexts of their learners, including their cultures. For example, in an investigation of counsellors' knowledge levels of cultural concepts and their perception of their cultural competency levels, the value of cultural knowledge was reported. The counsellors who had received an introductory cross-cultural course were more knowledgeable about cultural concepts and felt more competent in cross-cultural interventions than those who had not received the cross-cultural course (Holcomb-McCoy, 2005:414).

In the South African context a shift has to be made from the Western model of training our educators (which, I assume, also applies to EALCs) to a system that incorporates the indigenous knowledge and skills of the South African context (Pillay, 2011a:352). Currently some South African universities are training educators from an ecosystemic perspective; however, most EALCs have not received training in cultural diversity (Ingraham, 2000:232; Pillay, 2011a:352). One way of creating a sense of respect for learners is for EALCs to

fully understand the specific cultural background (or indigenous identity) of the learners with whom the intervention is taking place (Day-Vines & Day-Hairston, 2005:236; Nakashima et al., 2000:11). For example, in a study by Ruane (2010:214) black South African participants were asked to describe their reasons for not wanting to receive interventions from counsellors. The study found that participants were apprehensive about receiving treatment from both black and white counsellors. With regard to black counsellors, this reluctance related to the acculturation of the new generation of black counsellors. These counsellors did not know their own cultural history and practices, which inhibited their understanding of certain black participants' cultural backgrounds (Ruane, 2010:214). With regard to white counsellors, this reluctance related to their lack of knowledge of black participants' culture, partly because these counsellors had not received multicultural training (Ruane, 2010:214). In another example, a study by Ramgoon et al. (2011:90*)* found that culturally competent psychologists were more likely to collaborate with traditional healers in their communities than psychologists who have not received cross-cultural training.

A collaborative and culturally sensitive understanding can be developed when EALCs are culturally informed by being provided with cross-cultural training and empowered to make culturally relevant interventions (Schellenberg & Grothaus, 2009:440; Van Niekerk & Hay, 2009:242). For this reason cross-cultural training is necessary for counsellors (even those with the same cultural background as the learners they are dealing with) to become competent in understanding the complex nature of the changing dynamics of South African culture (Ross & Deverell, 2004:32; Van Niekerk & Hay, 2009:244). In summary, until EALCS are supported to be culturally competent and to work effectively with diverse groups of South African learners, the varied demographics, cultures, religions, sexual orientations, and so forth of the South African context will challenge EALCS and possibly leave them feeling incompetent, exhausted and vulnerable. This is in addition to the sad fact that many EALCs fulfil a guidance and counselling role without adequate preparation (like honours counselling courses for B.Ed. students) for the role of EALC.

3.3.2.2 Heavy EALC workload and burnout

Burnout is the phase after long-term or intense stress when a physical or emotional break-down occurs. Burnout is primarily characterised by exhaustion in people without any psychopathology (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998:36; Strumpfer, 2003:69 Van Zyl-Edeling, 2006:168). The dimensions of burnout include fatigue, becoming cynical and a lack of efficacy in the workplace (Rothmann, 2003:18; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998:36). Additional symptoms also include a decrease in motivation, not displaying functional behaviour at work and being distressed in all aspects of the person (i.e. physical, cognitive, affective and behavioural) (Rothmann, 2003:18; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998:36; Strumpfer, 2003:69; Van Zyl-Edeling, 2006:1680). Rothmann (2003:18) emphasises that the cause of burnout need not necessarily be because of one's relationship with people at work, but can be because of one's relationship with work in general (Ross & Deverell, 2004:304; Strumpfer, 2003:69).

International studies recognise that counsellors (and, I assume, EALCs) might experience burnout because of role confusion, ambiguity and conflict (DeLorme, 2010:100; Loveless, 2010:122; Nebe, 2010: 27; Windle, 2009:64). Role ambiguity involves educators having to resolve issues such as violence in schools, learners not attending school and families not providing stable environments while these educators are teaching the school curriculum, which might lead to role conflict and confusion (Lee, 2005:184). In other words, the contextual challenges (e.g. poverty and impact of HIV/AIDS) that spill over into the school and must be dealt with by EALCs are probably worsened by the latter's dual role as educators and counsellors. The many challenges of the various roles that counsellors have to fulfil might also lead to a heavy workload, as reported in the literature (Holcomb-McCoy & Mitchell, 2005; Van Niekerk & Hay, 2009:159). This in turn might lead to low job satisfaction, burnout and absenteeism (DeLorme, 2010:100; Loveless, 2010:122; Nebe, 2010:27; Rothmann, 2003:18; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998:36; Windle, 2009:64). Given the similarity between counsellors and EALCs, I assume that EALCs will experience similar challenges.

To overcome the various challenges mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, Corey (2001:39), Strumpfer (2003:69) and Rothmann (2003:18) make some suggestions regarding the importance of preventing burnout in various ways. Corey (2001:39) stresses the importance of educators being true to themselves in the workplace and evaluating the direction of their lives by evaluating their professional development and taking charge of their own development. If EALCs are able to evaluate their professional development they might feel empowered and have a sense of control over their lives (Corey, 2001:39; Strumpfer, 2003:69). Strumpfer (2003:69) suggests that to encourage resilience in the mental health professional and to prevent or overcome burnout, certain psychological variables have to be in place, i.e. engagement, meaningfulness, subjective well-being, positive emotions and proactive coping. For work to be meaningful and satisfying there needs to be a clear connection between the work and its psychological and compensatory awards (Rutter, 2012:38). According to Rothmann (2003:18), the employee will show work engagement when burnout is prevented or overcome. Work engagement is characterised by "energy, involvement and efficacy". There is no reference to how counsellor use of culturally appropriate, ready-made interventions might buffer workplace stress.

In order to further overcome the challenges set out in this section, a feeling of competence (which might lead to job satisfaction) can be developed by training EALCs in various counselling competencies (Bell, 2010:234; Davis, 2010:62; DeLorme, 2010:108; Du Preez & Roos, 2008:700; Kakacek, 2010:207; McCann, 2010:216; Nelson-Jones, 2005:19; Pask & Joy, 2009:99; Tadlock, 2009:25). According to Pask and Joy (2009:99), some of these counselling competencies include the following rational competencies (intellectual skills, analysis, problem solving, knowledge, therapeutic skills and informed application); emotional competencies (personal awareness and understanding of how to work with oneself and others) and ethical competencies (values, principles and scope of practice). For example, to develop a sense of counselling competence EALCs can participate in various training programmes provided by the Department of Education or academic institutions in order to develop the various counselling competencies (Du Preez & Roos, 2008:700;

Nelson-Jones, 2005:19; Pask & Joy, 2009:99). Furthermore, when EALCs feel competent they feel responsible and obligated to protect the vulnerable, and are more likely to feel that their work is worthwhile (Bell, 2010:234; McCann, 2010:216). Competent EALCs will also be more reflective about the particular obstacles they face by having a greater understanding of their particular role (Du Preez & Roos, 2008:700; Tadlock, 2009:44), which might also prevent burnout. If these psychological variables are in place it can prevent burnout or help EALCs to overcome it. Again, there is no literature on how counsellor use of a ready-made intervention might support a sense of competence.

3.3.2.3 Inadequate recognition for counsellors

In First World countries (such as the USA), support from school staff and parents has proved to be a valuable resource for school counsellors (DeLorme, 2010:108; Loveless, 2010:125; Windle, 2009:64). Support systems (both formal and informal) enabled school counsellors to find ways of both meeting the needs of the school and improving personal self-efficacy (DeLorme, 2010: 108; Loveless, 2010:125; Windle, 2009:64). In other words, in these schools, counsellors received positive recognition and this enabled them.

Cook et al. (2010:456) theorised that countries that were respectful of equity, autonomy and individual choice were more likely to recognise the value of counselling and the importance of school counsellors. Nevertheless, Owens et al. (2011:174) reported that poorer American schools (typically those servicing African American children) often did not receive the number of school counsellors they needed. Similarly, in South Africa school counsellors (let alone EALCs) are probably not highly valued enough.

Inadequate recognition of the value of professional counsellors (along with resource constraints) prevents many South African schools from recognising that counsellors can be a valuable resource if they are utilised correctly (Du Preez & Roos, 2008:699; Elkonin & Sandison, 2010:95; Pretorius, 2012:509; Van Niekerk & Hay, 2009:160). Inadequate recognition for counsellors is reflected by the limited number of advertisements placed in the public sector (e.g. hospitals, police, army, community mental health, education, etc.) that fit into the scope of practice for registered counsellors (Du Preez & Roos,

2008:699; Elkonin & Sandison, 2010:95; Van Niekerk & Hay, 2009:160). According to Elkonin and Sandison (2006:598), one of the reasons for the lack of posts is a lack of knowledge about the scope of practice of registered counsellors and thus a lack of recognition for the profession. Pretorius (2012:514) argues that another reason for inadequate recognition of the value of professional counsellors is because there is still an assumption that the clinical psychologist can do everything. Thus, any other category of registration pertaining to psychology is perceived of as being inferior to that of clinical psychologists. However, in South Africa it is necessary to adapt to the needs of a diverse population by utilising other categories of registration, such as counsellors (Pretorius, 2012:513).

As mentioned in Chapter One (see section 1.1), one consequence of this lack of recognition of the value of counsellors and the economic restraints imposed on schools is that educators have to fulfil the counselling needs in their schools to compensate for the lack of professionals (Van Niekerk & Hay, 2009:160). The lack of support is also a challenge for EALCs because it restricts the networks of resources within schools and communities. EALCs are thus expected to play a supportive role without the necessary resources (Pillay, 2011a:351). Some examples of limited resources include the few opportunities that are provided for training in basic technological skills or the newest counselling practices (Pillay, 2011a:351). Another example includes a lack of training in the practical implication of fulfilling the pastoral role as set out by the "Minimum requirements for teacher education qualifications" document (DoE, 2011). A lack of training might prevent EALCs from fulfilling the tasks expected of them and reduce their resilience (Ferreira, Ebersöhn & McCallaghan, 2010:199).

3.4   ENABLING EALCS' RESILIENCE

Various protective systems were discussed as resilience enhancing in Chapter Two (see section 2.4). These protective systems encompass ordinary processes of resilience (Masten, 2001:227), which I assume also apply to EALCs. As can be deduced from the preceding sections of this chapter, EALCs' resilience must be supported, partly because they play an important role in protecting high-risk learners (Masten et al., 2008:76) and partly because of their

challenging roles. Particularly in the South African context, EALCs need to be able to overcome South Africa's contextual challenges, their inadequate preparation for their EALC role and carry out the tasks assigned to them (see section 3.2).

Masten et al. (2009:128) describe three types of intervention strategies to enhance resilience within individuals (as mentioned in section 2.2). These strategies include risk-focused, asset-focused and process-focused strategies. All three could be applied to the support of EALCs.

Risk-focused strategies include the prevention of problems before they arise. An example of a risk-focused strategy that EALCs could use would be prevention education to educate learners about the risk of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS. This will provide EALCs with resources to support learners. By being able to support learners not to engage in risky behaviour, EALCs can promote health and wellness and, in a very real sense, decrease the number of challenges that they will have to cope with as EALCs (on the principle that prevention is better than cure). To support EALCs themselves, prevention strategies could include inviting EALCs to attend time-management courses or other enabling interventions before they become overworked or burnt out.

Asset-focused strategies help empower individuals by improving the quality of resources or assets available to support individuals to be resilient or by making people more aware of the resources that are available and how to access them. An example would include supporting and enabling EALCs to negotiate for resources to be made available to a school community, such as medical assistance or study material. Another is to make evidence-informed (or tested) interventions available to EALCs as a resource to be used in the course of counselling and guidance. However this is not verified in current literature.

Process-focused strategies include practices or interventions that elicit resilience through processes. Examples would include encouraging EALCs and learners to associate with their cultural identity or encouraging them to have a

sense of control over their lives (Wood et al., 2012c:430). When EALCs and learners are encouraged through a process-focused strategy to identify with their cultural identities, their sense of well-being and feeling of belonging are improved. This might give them a sense of control over their lives, which would in turn allow them to access the resources that are available as part of their cultural heritage.

In support of EALCs' interventions with learners, many interventions have been trialled and there is some preference for evidence-based practice (Galassi & Akos, 2007:9). For example, studies done by Baker et al. (1984:487), Borders and Drury (1992:487), Eder and Whiston (2006:337), Gerler (1985:39), McGannon et al. (2005), Prout and DeMartino (1986:285), Sexton et al. (1997), St. Clair (1989:219), and Whiston and Sexton (1998:412) identified the best practices that might be used by school counsellors. These include various evaluations and programmes that were found to be effective in developing learners' academic, career and personal domains. Galassi and Akos (2007:10–23) provide a comprehensive table of possible evidence-based school practices to further support the conclusion that proven school interventions as best practice will support school counsellors in their role of supporting learners. However, none of these interventions are indigenous to African contexts and there is no comment on whether counsellors (or EALCs) have found use of such tested interventions of value.

In my review of the available literature I found no studies reporting interventions to enable resilience in EALCs. However, I did find studies documenting resilience-promoting enablement of educators (Ferreira, Ebersöhn & McCallaghan, 2010:199; Ferreira, Ebersöhn & Odendaal, 2010:101; Theron, 2008c:29; Wood et al., 2012c:428). Some examples include the following:

1. A South African study (Theron, 2008c:29) looked at the impact that an asset-based intervention had on South African educators affected by HIV/AIDS in terms of empowering them. This was the Resilient Educators (REds) study where educators affected by HIV/AIDS participated in groups in an interactive programme (consisting of eight modules) that focused on information about HIV/AIDS and encouraged

skills to support those with HIV/AIDS. Results show that participants were enabled by the intervention.

2. The REds programme was repeated with Lesotho educators, who also reported enhanced resilience following participation in the intervention. Educators experienced a greater sense of agency on the community and personal level (Wood et al., 2012c:428).

3. Another South African study reported on the use of the STAR intervention (which included a body map and memory box technique) by educators who fulfil a pastoral role (Ferreira, Ebersöhn & McCallaghan, 2010:199). The study concluded that the intervention enabled educators' resilience by giving them a ready-made tool that they could utilise in the school context. Similarly, Ferreira, Ebersöhn and Odendaal (2010:101) concluded that using an asset-based approach (as was done in STAR) to enhance the knowledge and skills of educators who were supporting community members coping with HIV/AIDS helped both the educators and communities to develop resilience. The educators showed signs of a sense of increasingly "becoming" lay counsellors as they increased their knowledge and skills.

From these studies I conclude that interventions that teach skills and provide tools will enable and empower educators. It will be interesting to see if the Rm2R intervention with EALCs (i.e. the present study) has similar results.

Although most documented interventions have focused on enhancing the resilience of children, I did find some interventions designed to enhance resilience in adults; see Southwick et al. (2011:291-298) for a complete summary of such interventions. These interventions could also be tested in the future to explore which will be effective in enhancing the resilience of EALCs. Some examples include the following:

1. Hardiness training was developed to increase the hardiness of adults. This technique was developed by Khoshaba and Maddi (2001) and involved training adults to deal with stressors and solve problems. This

technique might be applicable to EALCs as a preventative intervention to help them deal with problems in their school contexts.

2. Stress inoculation training (SIT) consists of three phases that help adults recognise resilience-promoting resources. Meichembaum and Deffenbacher (1988) originally started SIT to treat trauma survivors, but it can be used in any setting (e.g. educators and EALCs affected by HIV/AIDS and the loss of colleagues).

3. Psychoeducational resilience enhancement intervention aims to enhance people's resilience when they are dealing with stress and to reduce the symptoms associated with psychological and physical distress. Steinhardt and Dolbier (2008) developed this technique to enhance protective systems in young adults in academic school settings. This intervention technique might be useful not just for EALCs' resilience, but also to support learners.

3.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I looked at the various multiple challenges that complicate how EALCs provide services to learners and school communities, and that probably threaten EALCs' resilience. Part of the complexity of their task lies in the fact that there is no formal description of what they are required to do. Another challenge lies in the multiple tasks they need to engage in as lay counsellors in addition to their teaching and administrative duties. Choosing or being assigned the role of an EALC does not equip an educator to overcome the challenges and fulfil the tasks set out in this chapter. The role of lay counsellor requires specialised culturally relevant training to allow those fulfilling this role to develop into resilient and competent lay counsellors. Mere knowledge about the role of community, citizenship and the pastoral carer does not adequately equip EALCs to provide proper care to black South African learners who are orphaned (Kotler & Kotler, 2007:124).

However, no studies have investigated how supporting EALCs by providing access to a ready-made, culturally aligned intervention (or any other interventions) might support EALCS to cope with these challenges. This gap, along with my students' repeated concerns about how inadequately prepared

they were to support (black) orphans, prompted the present study. I was eager to explore how the provision of an intervention that drew on EALCs' and learners' indigenous heritage (i.e. Rm2R) might enable EALCs (and, indirectly, their learners). I was aware that in so doing my study was aligned with the first task of EALCs (i.e. to be "emotional paramedics") and not with what I understand to be their action research mandate. I chose to work within this limitation and will suggest in my final chapter ways in which later studies might address this limitation. In Chapter Four I will explain the research methodology underpinning this exploration.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

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4.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

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4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

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4.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

↓

4.5 CONCLUSION
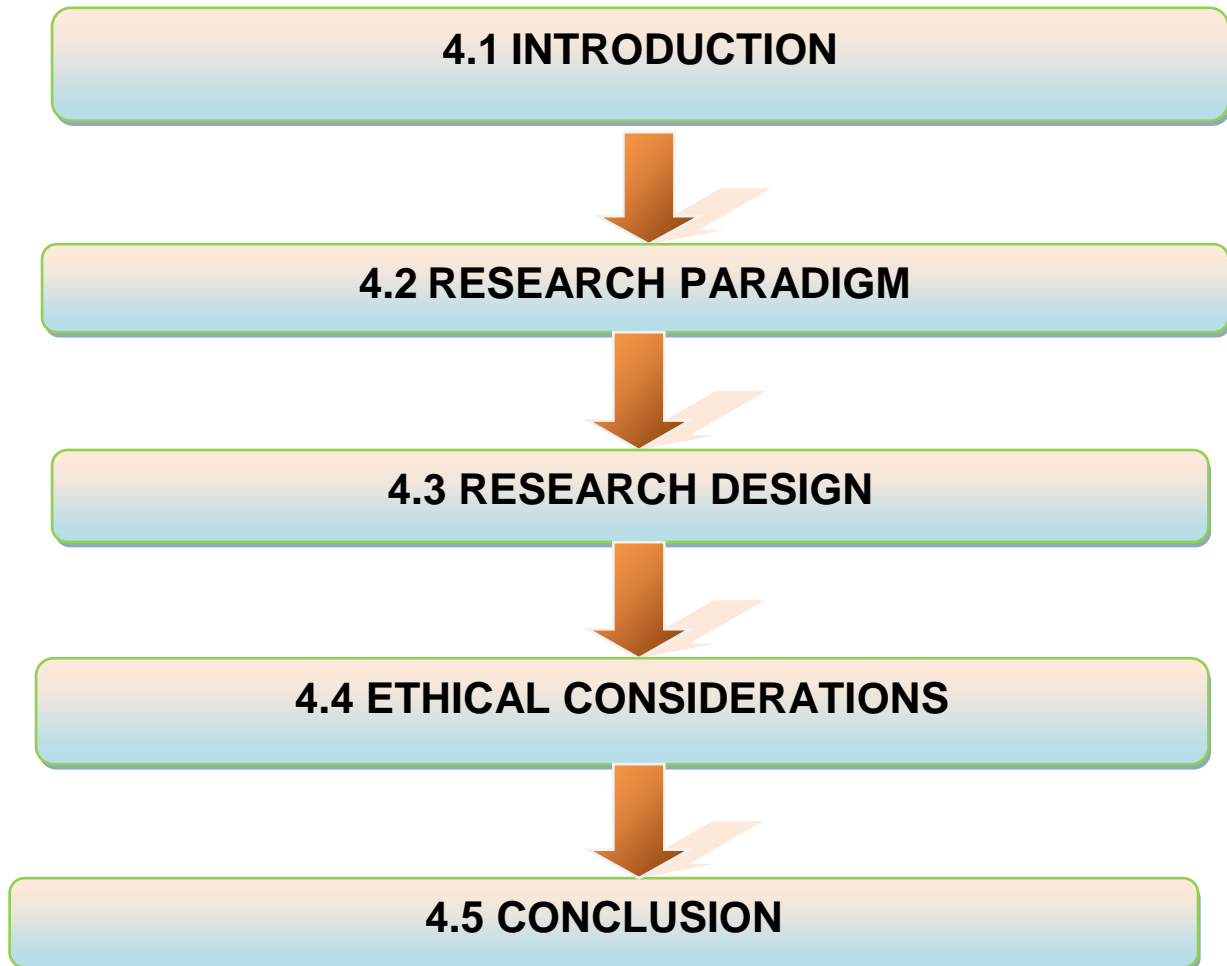
Figure 4.1 Overview of Chapter Four

4.1   INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Three I explored the role that EALCs could fulfil in schools by describing their tasks and the contextual obstacles facing them. I then discussed how EALCs could be supported towards (greater) resilience. In the present chapter I discuss the study in terms of the methodology I employed. I describe the paradigm from which I approached my study and the research design, and give a detailed account of the data generation methods and the data analysis and interpretation procedures followed. Thereafter, I discuss the quality criteria and ethical guidelines adhered to within the study.

My study stemmed from the lack of research that explores the value of bibliotherapy as a ready-made intervention tool for lay counsellors, particularly if these lay counsellors are also educators. Thus, the purpose of my research was to theorise about the value of providing EALCs with ready-made intervention tools, given the multiple stressors that they experience in the course of counselling learners placed at risk by their environments. A secondary, but related purpose was to explore EALCs' experiences of the Rm2R intervention strategy as a pathway to resilience for orphaned black South African learners and for EALCs themselves. The research questions underpinning the purpose and secondary purpose are summarised in Figure 4.2.

Primary research question: What is the value of providing EALCs with a ready-made intervention tool to support EALC resilience?

Secondary research questions

Sub-question 1: What are EALCs' experiences of the Rm2R intervention strategy as a possible means of encouraging the resilience of orphaned black South African learners?

Sub-question 2: What are EALCs' experiences of the Rm2R intervention strategy as a possible means of encouraging their own resilience?

Sub-question 3: What refinements do EALCs recommend (if any) for the Rm2R intervention in order to address frustrations they experienced during its implementation?

Figure 4.2 Overview of the research questions

4.2   RESEARCH PARADIGM

As indicated in Chapter One, my research is embedded in an interpretivist paradigm (Creswell, 2009:8). This paradigm supports research that respects social constructivist explanations of how knowledge is co-generated (Creswell, 2007a:20; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:13) and aligns with my focus on exploring and understanding the meaning that EALCs construct for the Rm2R intervention. The belief that meaning evolves through people's social and

cultural experiences is central to this paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:13; Creswell, 2007a:21).

An interpretivist paradigm involves the researcher as the primary instrument in the generation and analysis of qualitative data by taking participants' subjective experiences and interpreting the meanings that they attach to these experiences. This is done by interacting with participants and observing and listening to what they have to say. The interpretivist researcher relies on participants' experiences and attempts to describe these in rich detail (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:5). In this sense, intepretivist researchers and participants are partners in the research process and co-generate findings (Levin & Greenwood, 2011:29). It is important for the interpretivist researcher to understand the participants' experiences fully in the context of their personal and societal backgrounds (including cultural, racial, religious and gender factors) that might influence their experiences (Terre Blanche et al., 2006:273–77).

An interpretivist paradigm was well-suited to my research because I wanted to understand the meaning that EALCs construct for their experiences of the Rm2R intervention in order to explore the value of providing EALCs with a ready-made intervention tool. The participants interpreted their experiences of the Rm2R intervention and I in turn interpreted their experiences in order to answer my central research question. This means that the participants and I were involved in an interactive process that entailed a participatory exploration of their experiences and of how they constructed the meaning of a social process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:5; Mertens, 2005:14), in this instance the meaning that EALCs constructed for the Rm2R intervention strategy. Although an interpretivist paradigm generally provides a deeper understanding of the phenomenon in question, it has limitations, one of which includes the possibility that my own perceptions or assumptions could influence the findings of the study (Creswell, 2007b:62).

4.3   RESEARCH DESIGN

I used a qualitative research design (Terre Blanche et al., 2006:274) in this research, partly because this is what an interpretivist paradigm calls for. In addition, a qualitative design is suitable for this research because the meaning

that EALCs attach to the Rm2R intervention strategy and its value to them were explored; in other words, the nature of my study called for a qualitative design. My study sought to understand EALCs' experiences in order to theorise about the value of ready-made interventions rather than to predict its nature, as is more typical in quantitative studies (Terre Blanche et al., 2006:274).

A limitation of a qualitative design is that the results might only be applicable to the specific individuals who participated in the study and not to EALCs in the general school system (Creswell, 2009:193). However, the advantage of this design is that it provided an understanding of EALCs' experiences that allowed me to theorise about the value of the Rm2R intervention as a ready-made tool.

4.3.1 Strategy of the inquiry

I used phenomenological research as the strategy of my inquiry (Mertens, 2005:240). Phenomenological research is a qualitative strategy in which a small number of participants' living experiences of a phenomenon, as described by the participants themselves, are explored in order to understand the phenomenon (Creswell, 2009:13; Mertens, 2005:240). In this research I explored the value of ready-made interventions by exploring the experiences of EALCs using the Rm2R intervention. In doing so I was able to partner with EALCs to potentially support learners at high risk in the school context. A limitation of applying phenomenological research (Creswell, 2009:113) in my study is that my findings and subsequent guidelines would have been shaped by the experiences of only a few EALCs. It will therefore be important in the future to gain insight into the experiences of other EALCs and to continue theorising about the value of ready-made interventions.

4.3.2 Participant selection

Participants were purposively selected in terms of their suitability and convenience for the study (Creswell, 2009:178; Terre Blanche et al., 2006:304). All the participants were students at the university where I am a lecturer and were therefore easy to access. Although I understood that recruiting students from only my own institution could be interpreted as a type of sampling bias (Mertens, 2009:175), my easy access to these students meant that my study was logistically simpler. Furthermore, at my institution students who are

enrolled for an honours degree in Education that specifically includes counselling-focused modules are expected to be involved in interventions at their schools. Their participation in my study therefore also suited their needs.

To be included in my study, participants had to comply with specific criteria. These included that they needed to be:

- qualified educators working (formally or informally) in schools as EALCs;

- enrolled for courses in community counselling and lay counselling as part of their B.Ed. (Hons) degree in the School of Education Sciences at NWU; and

- willing to participate in the Rm2R study.

I recruited participants by word of mouth: I informed students about my project by speaking briefly about it at the end of counselling classes at the university. I handed out letters of information to those who were interested. Initially nine participants agreed to participate. As this is a typical sample size for a phenomenological study (Creswell, 2009:181; Greeff, 2005:305), I proceeded to train the participants to use the Rm2R intervention in their various schools. However, when I reviewed the data generated by these participants it was clear that the level of data saturation (i.e. when the same information is heard repeatedly; see Greeff, 2005:294; Strydom & Delport, 2011:376) was not sufficient to answer all the research questions guiding the study. Therefore I recruited seven additional participants. The data that were additionally generated did enable data saturation: at this point in the research I started to hear the same information repeatedly and no longer heard anything new (Greeff, 2005:294; Strydom & Delport, 2011:376). Thus, the total sample comprised 16 participants. In summary, the sample size was emergent until enough data had been gathered to enable full understanding of the experiences of the EALCs' use of the Rm2R intervention in order to allow me to theorise about the value of such ready-made interventions (Greeff, 2005:294; Strydom & Delport, 2011:376). Table 4.1 provides a description of the participants in the study.

Table 4.1 Description of the participants

Participant	Sex	Age	Years of teaching, following formal qualifications as educators	Current EALC duties	Prior / current experience of school-based challenges and /or challenges relating to EALC duties	Type of school	Race & language[1]
P1	F	24	3	Formally responsible for EALC duties	Yes (see Addendum J)	Primary	Coloured Afrikaans
P2	F	23	2	Formally responsible for EALC duties	Yes (see Addendum J)	Primary	White Afrikaans
P3	M	24	3	Informally responsible for EALC duties	Yes (see Addendum J)	Primary	White Afrikaans
P4	F	47	26	Formally responsible for EALC duties	Yes (see Addendum J)	Primary	White Afrikaans
P5	F	24	2	Informally responsible for EALC duties	Yes (see Addendum J)	Primary	White Afrikaans
P6	F	24	3	Informally responsible for EALC duties	Yes (see Addendum J)	Primary	White Afrikaans
P7	F	31	9	Informally responsible for EALC duties	Yes (see Addendum J)	Primary	White Afrikaans
P8	F	24	4	Informally responsible for EALC duties	Yes (see Addendum J)	Primary	White Afrikaans
P9	F	25	3	Informally responsible for EALC duties	Yes (see Addendum J)	Primary	White Afrikaans
P10	F	25	3	Informally responsible for EALC duties	Yes (see Addendum J)	Primary	Black isiZulu
P11	M	43	22	Informally responsible for EALC duties	Yes (see Addendum J)	Primary	Black Sesotho
P12	F	51	20	Formally responsible for EALC duties	Yes (see Addendum J)	Primary	Black isiZulu
P13	F	45	15	Formally responsible for EALC duties	Yes (see Addendum J)	Primary	Black Sesotho
P14	F	43	15	Formally responsible for EALC duties	Yes (see Addendum J)	Primary	Black Sesotho
P15	F	40	15	Formally responsible for EALC duties	Yes (see Addendum J)	Primary	Black isiZulu
P16	F	46	15	Formally responsible for EALC duties	Yes (see Addendum J)	Primary	Black Sesotho

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[1] The fact that participants in the first group of nine were all Afrikaans speaking and mainly white (eight out of nine) and those in the second group of seven were all black and speakers of African languages was purely coincidental and reflects no preference on my part.

4.3.3 Data generation methods

I used three qualitative methods, i.e. the draw-and-write technique (Guillemin, 2004:272; Mitchell et al., 2011:31; Rose, 2001:1), focus group interviews (Creswell, 2007a:215) and research diaries (Creswell, 2009:181). The three data generation methods were compared (see section 4.3.6) and the findings were crystallised. The process of crystallisation means that the researcher portrays the findings from different viewpoints using different ways of communicating them. The findings will often be offered in a contextual, open-ended way. It is not expected that each data generation method will offer exactly the same findings, but rather a different perspective on the phenomenon being studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:5). Authors such as Ellingson (2009:190; 2011:605), Richardson (2000:923), Janesick (2000:392) and Saukko (2004:25) endorse crystallisation as an effective method to present findings through multiple lenses such as by using different data generation methods.

I adhered to the following principles that typify crystallisation (Ellingson, 2011:605):

- I used crystallisation to create knowledge about the experiences of EALCs with regards to the Rm2R intervention through a deep and complex interpretation of my findings.

- I used various ways of presenting findings that included interpretations of participants' drawings, and citations from participants' research diaries and focus group interviews.

- I reflected on my theoretical assumptions (see sections 1.7.1 and 1.7.2) and the personal experiences that led to my assumptions about the participants before interpreting the data. Thus, I reflected on my role as researcher (see section 4.3.5).

- My discussion of my findings revealed contextual and complex interpretations of findings that did not try to see the knowledge gained from my study as conclusive.

- In my study the different data generation methods offered different viewpoints, reflections and perspectives on the EALCs' experiences of the Rm2R intervention without necessarily providing the same conclusions.

Each data generation method will be discussed below.

4.3.3.1 Draw-and-write technique

Guillemin (2004:272), Rose (2001:1) and Mitchell et al. (2011:31) define the draw-and-write technique as a visual record of how the drawer understands the phenomenon being investigated. The draw-and-write technique can be done in a group context of six to eight participants (Creswell, 2009:181) or on a one-to-one basis. Drawings are often a form of projection that allows participants to communicate their experience of a phenomenon through self-selected symbols (Theron, 2008c:33). In this way drawings, like other representations, can be used as ways of understanding how people see their world (Theron, 2008c:29).

I used the draw-and-write technique in my research because it helped me to understand how my participants experienced themselves as lay counsellors before and after the Rm2R intervention. According to Guillemin (2004:272), it is important to establish rapport during the drawing process and to encourage participants to feel comfortable. I invited participants to make a drawing, but first, in order to encourage them to feel comfortable, I reminded them that the quality of their drawing was unimportant. I asked participants to draw about their experiences as a lay counsellor and then to write a paragraph to explain what their drawing meant (see section 4.3.4 for more detail on how participants generated drawings). Their explanations helped to limit my subjectivity when I interpreted their drawings. I also interacted with the participants to make sure that I understood their explanations. For example, I asked some participants on a one-to-one basis to help me further understand their explanations by adding detail to what they had written.

Using drawings as a method for data generation has several advantages. Drawings are a fairly simple method for participants to use and are for this reason encouraged by researchers in the social sciences (Mitchell et al., 2011:31). Drawings are also an inexpensive form of data generation (Leedy &

Ormrod, 2005:96). Furthermore, they do not call for advanced linguistic ability to express emotion, perception and experiences (Mitchell et al., 2011:36).

A limitation of the use of drawings is that not everyone might be able to express themselves equally well through drawings and it thus may not be an effective method for all participants (Guillemin, 2004:272). Another limitation is that some researchers question the trustworthiness of how the content of the drawings is analysed. In order to overcome the limitation of possible lack of trustworthiness, the participants were included in the analysis of the drawing (Mitchell et al., 2011:20). I involved them by allowing them to freely draw and explain their drawings. By allowing participants to choose what exactly to draw and write about, I helped them to feel in control of the research procedure (Liebenberg, 2009:23).

4.3.3.2 Focus group interviews

I used unstructured focus group interviews to explore the experiences of the participating lay counsellors regarding the Rm2R intervention (Creswell, 2007a:215). The optimal group size of a focus group is six to eight participants (Creswell, 2009:181) and I tried to adhere to this (see the discussion of the data generation process for more details). Focus group interviews can involve open-ended questions to elicit participants' views and opinions (Creswell, 2009:181). The focus group method complemented the interpretive nature of my research. As I explained when I reflected on the meaning of an interpretivist paradigm (see above), from this perspective reality is socially constructed and the reality of my study was thus viewed through the interpretations of my participants (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011:546).

An advantage of using focus groups rather than individual interviews is that different perspectives and comparisons can be explored within the same group, making it easier to distinguish differences and similarities among individuals' experiences of the Rm2R intervention. Another advantage is the capacity to rely on interaction in the group to provide concentrated amounts of data. Thus, using focus group interviews facilitates a richer, thicker and more complex level of understanding about the value of an intervention, in this case the Rm2R intervention (Greeff, 2005:312; Terre Blanche et al., 2006:304). Furthermore,

the semi-structured focus group method was an advantage because I was able to control the line of questioning and ensure that it focused on obtaining answers to my research questions (Creswell, 2009:179).

The use of focus groups has various limitations. Results might have been biased because only active participants might have been heard and results might therefore not have been a true reflection of participants' views of the Rm2R intervention strategy (Greeff, 2005:312; Terre Blanche, 2006:304). This potential risk was managed by actively encouraging passive participants to respond in the focus group interviews. Another limitation is the danger that passive participants might be influenced to comply with the opinion of the group in order not to differ from it (Greeff, 2005:312; Terre Blanche, 2006:304). This potential risk was reduced by the use of research diaries that would either confirm or disconfirm what was said in the focus group interviews (Creswell, 2009:179).

4.3.3.3 Research diaries

Plummer (1983:17) explains the diary as "the documented life par excellence, chronicling as it does the immediately contemporaneous flow of public and private events that are significant to the diarist". Thus, research diaries are useful to researchers because they provide insight into participants' private, subjective experiences. When researchers ask participants to record experiences relating to the research focus, then they have a way of sharing the latter's private experiences, albeit in a small way (Symon, 2004:98). Typical aspects that can be recorded in a research diary are responses and emotions, specific behaviours, interactions with other people, activities (such as an activity log, as proposed by Sonnentag, 2001:196), and proceedings as an intervention method (e.g. to record activities throughout the day to ensure better time management - see Jepsen et al., 1989:207).

Authors such as Clarke (2009:68) and Engin (2011:296) acknowledge that the research diary aided them in understanding their participants' experiences of, and thoughts and feelings about phenomena related to their research focus. This process of reflection through written records of what was seen, heard and experienced by the participants (e.g. feelings, problems, ideas and

impressions) also helped me to fully understand the unique South African context of the participants in the intervention (Creswell, 2009:182) and to make sense of their subjective experiences relating to their use of the Rm2R intervention. For this data generation technique to work effectively, the participants must have self-awareness and be able to interpret their experience of the phenomenon being studied, in this case the Rm2R intervention strategy. It was important for the participants to reflect on their own values, cultures and perceptions of life in order to understand their preconceptions of Rm2R, as well as what might have biased their actual experiences of the Rm2R intervention (Mertens, 2005:259).

Participants were encouraged to reflect on each of the 22 traditional stories used in story-telling sessions and observe the small groups of learners to whom they told the stories during each story-telling session. Participants were thus encouraged to reflect on the learners' behaviour while being told the story, their own feelings during the session and the learners' comments about the story being told. Participants were asked to record any change in the learners' attitude and behaviour and to make recommendations concerning possible refinements that could be made to address frustrations experienced during the implementation of the Rm2R intervention. Participants were also encouraged through prompts (see section 4.3.4) to reflect on their counselling skills and the extent to which the Rm2R intervention either served or failed them as a therapeutic tool when working with orphaned black South African learners.

One advantage of the use of reflective diaries was that I was able to capture the exact words of the participants. The diaries could also be completed at any time convenient to them. Furthermore, the data contained in the diaries consisted of written evidence that did not need to be transcribed. Participants were also able to record their observations of learners using research diaries instead of using more obtrusive forms of observation such as cameras. What is more, the research diary method allowed the immediate experiences of participants during the story-telling sessions to be recorded after the session had finished (Leadbetter, 1993:613). The disadvantages of reflective diaries are that not all people are equally capable of expressing themselves through writing. Also, diaries might be incomplete and not contain enough data to allow for accurate

interpretation. The above limitations were overcame through my regular encouragement of participants to complete the diaries and by collecting data until data saturation was reached (Creswell, 2009:180; Greeff, 2005:294).

4.3.4 The data generation process

The research process is summarised in Figure 4.3. In my explanation of each step I do not specify which group of participants the explanation applies to (the first group of nine or the second of seven) because the process was the same for both.
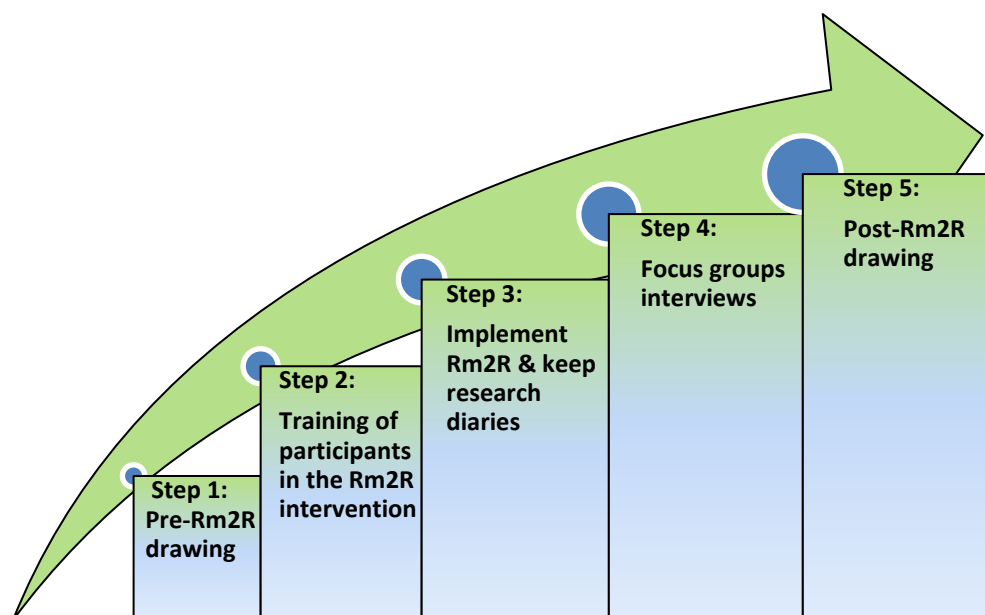
Figure 4.3 The data generation process

| Step 1 | • Pre-Rm2R drawing |

I met with the group of participants in a university venue that was accessible to us all (I used a lecture room that the participants were familiar with) and at a time that suited all concerned. After I had reminded the participants about the aim of the study and their voluntary participation in it, I asked them to reflect on their experiences of being lay counsellors. I then asked them to capture this reflection in a hand-drawn picture. The specific brief was: "Draw a picture about your experiences as a lay counsellor. Remember, how well you draw is not important." Participants were asked to draw with pencils on a piece of white

paper. They were asked to sit away from one another and not to look at one another's drawings. Some participants said that they felt uncomfortable with drawing. I reassured them that the drawings were not about how well they draw and that the other methods of data generation compensated for their perceived lack of drawing ability. My reassurance was enough to encourage participants to willingly draw. Following this, I asked participants to explain their drawing by writing a paragraph about it (Rose, 2001:45). Where necessary, I probed for deeper explanations. I did this by telephoning participants during the data analysis phase. I then asked the participants for permission to keep and use their drawings and to contact them should I want to understand their explanations in more detail.

Step 2	• Training of participants in the Rm2R intervention

Step 2 was devoted to training the participants in the use of the Rm2R intervention. I trained them with the assistance of my promoter. The training was quite brief (it took approximately 60 minutes) and included participants understanding the contents of Rm2R, the learners for whom Rm2R was intended (9-14 year old orphaned learners) and how to use the stories that made up Rm2R intervention (see Addendum I).

The original Rm2R intervention was aimed at orphaned learners. I encouraged my participants to do the same, as there was empirical evidence that orphaned learners who participated in the Rm2R intervention benefited from the process and were supported towards greater resilience (Joubert & Theron, 2011; Theron, 2011; Wood et al., 2012b:225). The original Rm2R intervention was aimed at testing the value of the story contents in promoting at-risk learners' resilience. For this reason Rm2R facilitators were originally trained to present the stories without embellishing them (e.g. adding role plays or props). Although they were trained to simply tell the stories and not interact, some were frustrated by this and added pictures. This has since been critiqued and adapted (see Wood et al., 2012b:242), my participants were trained in the original implementation method.

In order to recruit orphans, participants were advised to work with school administrators to gain information regarding which learners were orphaned. All schools had such lists. They used this list as a start to recruiting orphans. In most instances, the participants were already familiar with these children. In order not to stigmatise them, they invited these learners on a one-to-one basis to participate in story-telling sessions with other learners. The aim was explained as set out in the letter of information/consent (see Addendum C). EALC-participants took care to work after school hours so that orphaned learners were not called as a group during school time.

Step 3	• Implement Rm2R & keep research diaries

Participants were required to implement Rm2R for 11 weeks (two stories per week) at a school of their choice. The stories were provided to the participants in English, isiZulu or isiXhosa. The participants could, however, choose to translate the stories to other languages (e.g. Sesotho or Afrikaans), depending on their preference and the learners' proficiency in a particular language. However, no stories were translated (participants noted that they had no time to translate the stories and so used them in English rather than translating them into Sesotho or Afrikaans). By not restricting the language used I hoped that participants would be able to comment on how meaningful the contents of the stories were to educators and learners, particularly because the stories reflect black South African culture. Each participant interacted with a group of five to ten learners for the duration of the 11 week period (see Addendum J). Each participant kept a research diary to reflect on his/her experiences of the Rm2R intervention. The following prompts guided this (see Addendum A):

- Please reflect on today's story-telling session. Comment on the children's behaviour while telling the story, your own feelings during the session and the children's comments on the story being told.

- Please reflect on the language of today's story. Comment on how the language influenced the children's understanding. Comment on how comfortable the children and you were with the contents of the story, which reflects black South African culture.

- Please reflect on your response to Rm2R as a lay counsellor. How is Rm2R enabling you? How is it failing you? How would you change it?

The participants were asked to give me their diaries after every four sessions. I made copies of what they had written. My motivation in asking for the diaries once every month was that I was able to gauge if the participants were completing their diaries in sufficient detail, whether further encouragement was needed and if I needed to add additional reflection guidelines.

| Step 4 | • Focus group interviews |

Four focus group interviews were conducted with the participants regarding their experiences of the Rm2R intervention when the 22 sessions (i.e. 11 weeks) had been completed. The interviews were conducted in English and Afrikaans, depending on the language preference of the participating group of participants. Interviews were tape recorded, transcribed and translated into English where necessary. The interviews occurred after the 11 weeks of story-telling at the university campus where they studied, i.e. the Vanderbijlpark Campus of NWU. Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes.

In order to answer the questions of my research study I first interviewed the participants. In the first round (prior to data saturation) all nine participated in two interview sessions. The focus of the first session was on the general experiences of the Rm2R intervention. To generate data relating to this I asked, "What were your experiences while using the Rm2R intervention?" I probed as necessary. The focus of the second session was on how the Rm2R intervention could be improved. To generate data relating to this I asked, "How would you improve the Rm2R intervention?" When necessary, I followed up these questions with probes or requests for further clarification. I repeated these sessions with the participants who participated in the second round. All seven participants participated. This second round facilitated data saturation.

Step 5	• Post-Rm2R drawing

Participants were asked once again to make a drawing that helped them to reflect on their experiences as a lay counsellor (see Addendum B). The same process was followed as with the Pre-Rm2R drawing (see Step 1). The specific brief was, "Draw a picture about your experience as a lay counsellor. Remember, how well you draw is not important." Following this, the participants were each asked to explain their drawing by writing a paragraph about it (Rose, 2001:45).

4.3.5 Role of the researcher

As a qualitative researcher I was integral to each of the steps listed above. I co-generated the data by inviting participants to generate data in very specific ways and by encouraging them to write detailed, specific reflections on their experiences. I co-interpreted the data in the focus groups when I probed in specific ways and when I asked participants to explain their drawings. Although I have reflected on the assumptions I brought to my study in Chapter One, I limited these assumptions to those relating to the focus of my study (i.e. resilience and EALCs). At this point it is necessary to comment on the assumptions that shaped my role as researcher.

I was a fieldworker in the original Rm2R intervention strategy (Joubert & Theron, 2011; Theron, 2011). I tested the ways in which the Rm2R intervention supports black South African learners in Gauteng towards resilience, in much the same way as was done in the pilot Rm2R project in the Eastern Cape (Theron, 2011; Wood et al. 2012b:225). Findings from the pilot suggested that the Rm2R intervention was an effective tool for encouraging resilience among black South African learners. In my observations of the learners participating in my own fieldwork and from preliminary data analyses I became more convinced of the value of Rm2R intervention (Joubert & Theron, 2011; Theron, 2011) and therefore believed that it was a valuable tool towards the empowerment of lay counsellors. I am aware that my positive experience might have made me biased in my assessment of the participants and for this reason I met regularly with my promoter to debrief (Creswell, 2009:91). I was also able to train

participants to enthusiastically implement the Rm2R intervention because of my personal positive experiences. I was also able to recall the pitfalls of the implementation of the Rm2R intervention and thus to warn participants in this regard. The problems that I experienced while implementing the Rm2R intervention were similar to those of Wood et al. (2012a:504).

As researcher implementing the Rm2R intervention I played a vital role in the co-generation and interpretation of data. It was therefore important that I explore the possible impact on the gathering and interpretation of data of the assumptions I hold (such as those about the participants) and the background I come from (Creswell, 2009:177). Coming from an Afrikaans background, born in the apartheid era and growing up during the time in which South Africa commenced its transformation to democracy, I have certain assumptions and experiences that might influence the way data is gathered and interpreted. While growing up I enjoyed the privilege of many resources, including basic security and affection from my family. However, I was also aware from a young age that there was injustice in the world around me, especially in underprivileged schools where educators were expected to function effectively despite difficult circumstances.

After training as a counsellor I worked for four years as a counsellor and educator at both primary and secondary schools. In the process I gained insight not only into the adversities experienced by learners, but also those of lay counsellors. Most lay counsellors are not adequately appreciated and do not have the necessary resources to be able to assist learners. They are also hampered by being in a system where there is no support from colleagues, who neither understand the context in which lay counsellors work nor the ethical issues that they have to uphold. However, I have seen that some educators and lay counsellors are able to rise above adverse circumstances (such as being affected in some way by HIV/AIDS and experiencing a lack of material or emotional support). My assumptions is therefore that if lay counsellors are provided with more helpful tools that enable them to enhance black South African learners' resilience, then the learners, the counsellors, the community and the school will be empowered. I guarded against these assumptions influencing the process whereby I attached significance to the participants'

experiences. It was also important that my assumptions concerning lay counsellors did not influence my interpretation of the participants' experiences. My interpretations might have been biased in that I assumed that the Rm2R intervention was appropriate in the participants' context and was a helpful tool because of the lack of better resources. It was important to recognise this and reflect upon it in order to correctly interpret the data that I collected and to engage in debriefing sessions with my promoter.

4.3.6 Data analysis and interpretation

My use of the draw-and-write technique, research diaries, and four focus group interviews generated visual and narrative data and transcripts (Creswell, 2009:181) and provided three data sets. I analysed these data using inductive content analysis. This means that the data directed the set of codes and themes that emerged, rather than my imposing a set of codes onto them (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:142; Merriam, 2009:183; Nieuwenhuis, 2007a:99). My inductive data analysis relied on the constant comparative method (Merriam, 2009:175), i.e. I used inductive content analysis while constantly comparing codes/themes within and across each data set (Merriam, 2009:175). I analysed each data set inductively and compared these analyses in order to determine themes within the data before comparing the themes across the sets (Creswell, 2009:184; Ellingson, 2009:55; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:142; Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2010:37; Nieuwenhuis, 2007a:99).

For example, each drawing was inductively analysed by coding data that answered my research questions (one question at a time) (Creswell, 2009:186; Merriam, 2009:180). Codes were also revised to address redundant codes (Creswell, 2012:245); see phase 2 of the inductive content analysis process for a more complete description of this process. Then a master list of codes for the drawings was constructed and grouped to form themes. The same method was used with the transcripts of the focus group interviews and the narrative data from the research diaries. Then each list of themes for each data set was compared with the others to construct a single master list of themes. The themes were then refined by being categorised into major themes and sub-themes in order to answer each of the three research sub-questions pertaining to the study (Merriam, 2009:175–82). Although I compiled a master list, I was

careful to retain the multiple, nuanced facets of EALCs' experiences, so as to promote crystallised findings (Ellingson, 2011:605).

The phases of the inductive content analysis process given in Figure 4.4 and discussed below provide a more complete description of how the above inductive process was conducted.
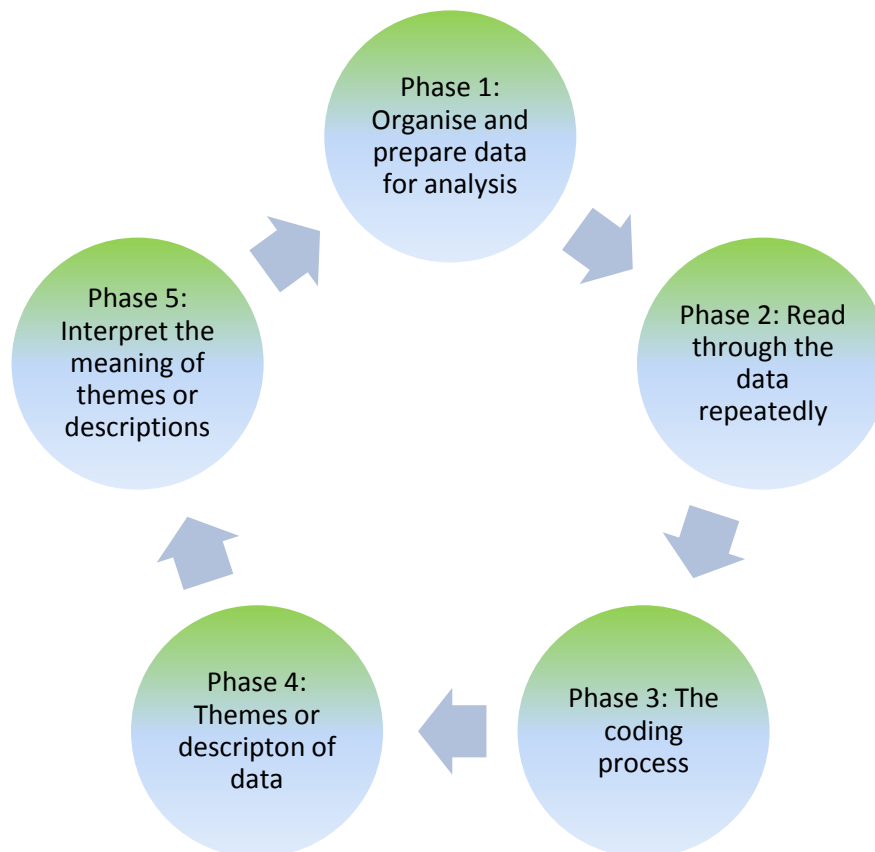
Figure 4.4 Phases of the inductive content analysis process

Source: Creswell (2009:185)

Phase 1	• Organise and prepare data for analysis
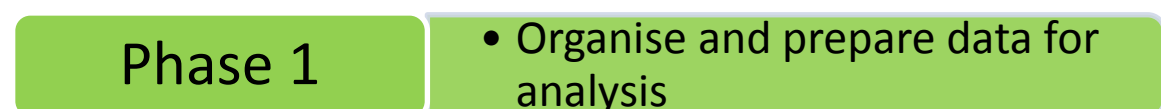
After obtaining the data through the data generation steps (as described in section 4.3.4), I transcribed the four focus group interviews verbatim to produce four electronic transcripts (totalling 58 pages). I retyped each participant's hand-written research diary notes to produce 16 narrative data sets (totalling 73 pages). I scanned the pre- and post-drawings (with the participant's number as the picture name) into a secure computer and typed out the explanations of the

drawings provided by the participants. The electronic versions of the data sets were translated from Afrikaans into English (where needed) and back translated by a language educator proficient in both languages.

Phase 2	• Read through the data repeatedly

I read through the data repeatedly to get a general sense of the information and examined each data set intensively (Guillemin, 2004:287). I first started to read through the data generated by the draw-and-write technique, then read the transcripts of the focus group interviews and lastly the narrative data of the research diaries. I worked with one data set at a time (first the drawings, then the transcripts and then the narrative data). Within each set I started with one participant's data. When I was familiar with this data I moved on to the next participant's data, and so on. By examining the data sets I began to have a general sense of the participants' experiences (Creswell, 2009:185).

Phase 3	• The coding process

To code the data I used Tesch's steps as outlined in Creswell (2009:186). This meant that I used steps 1–3 to code the data within each set before comparing the themes across sets (step 4).

Step 1: In this step the labelling of data took place. In order to do this I went through the visual and narrative data and transcripts to label any piece of data that answered the particular research sub-question that I was focusing on. I did this by writing a word or phrase that best described or paraphrased the particular piece of data. These were my codes. Every code pertaining to sub-question 1 was coloured in blue, to sub-question 2 in pink and to sub-question 3 in green to keep the answers to each sub-question visually identifiable. The drawings and explanations included below present an example of how I coded (see Addendum D for an example of the coding process for each data generation method).

What follows is an example of the coding process of a pre-drawing and post-drawing for sub-question 2.

Pre-drawing of Participant 1:
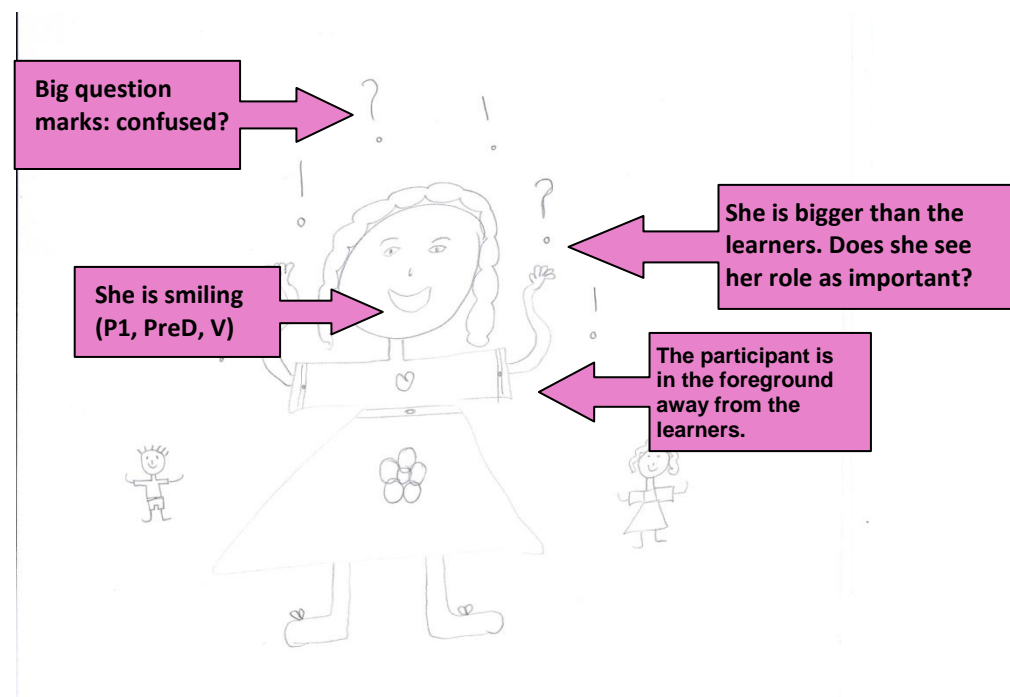
Please explain your drawing of your experience as a lay counsellor. Write a paragraph about it.

"I see myself as a woman standing in front of children with a question mark. The question is what solution will work for the learners' specific problem. *(She is wondering how to help the learners)* What must I do and do I do it in the right way? *(Uncertainty on how to help learners)* The specific learners expect a possible solution that they can use and that can possibly work. *(There are expectations from the learners in solving their problems)* I have the responsibility to help other people. *(The participant feels responsible for helping other people)* At the moment I concentrate on all the small cases and refer possible big cases to our school psychologist. *(The participant helps "smaller" cases but has a referral network for more difficult ("big") cases)* I do not feel that I can have a good relationship with the learners because of my lack of having the means to do so. *(The participant feels that she is unable to form a bond with the learners)*
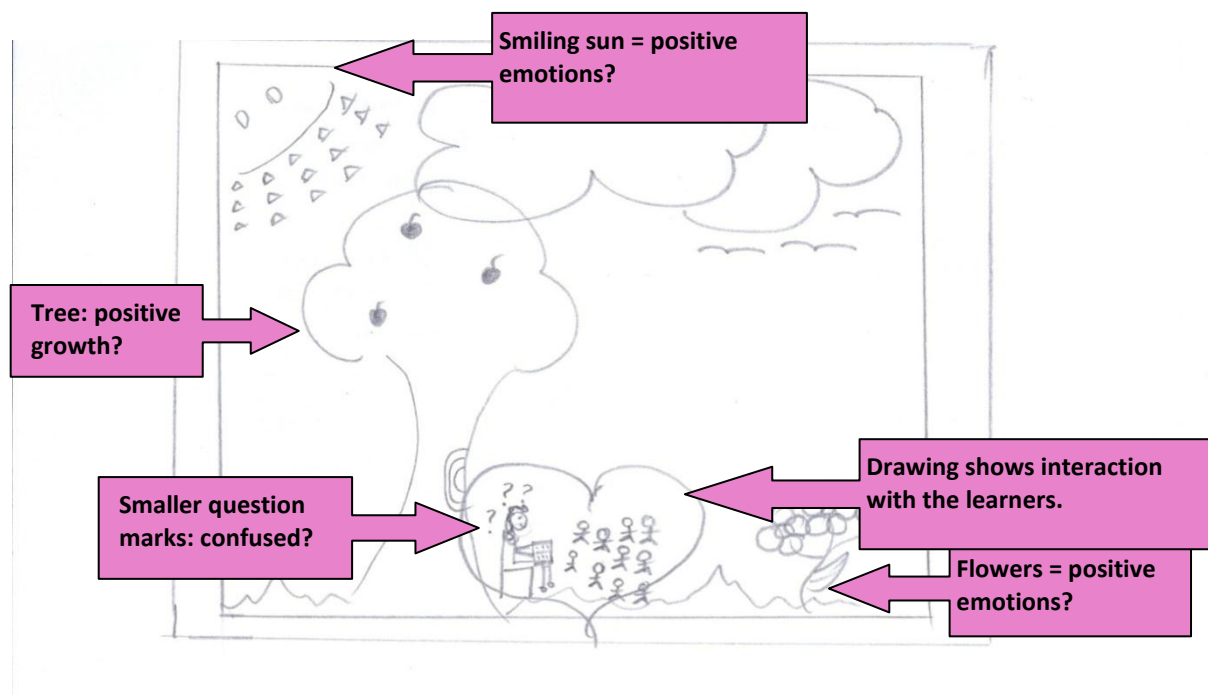
Post-drawing of Participant 1:

Please explain your drawing of your experience as a lay counsellor. Write a paragraph about it.

"The drawing explains the love between a teacher and her learners. *(Positive emotion; positive bond)* The learners are comfortable with her and respect her. *(Sense of professional competence)* The children are happy because the teacher is going to read to them *(Learners like being read to)* and it is fun for the learners. *(Learners enjoy stories)* But for the teacher every day is a new challenge because she does not know what happens at home. *(The participant still experiences work as challenging)*

Step 2:   In step 2 codes were revised to address redundant codes, i.e. excess codes that did not fit in with themes. My objective was to reduce the list of codes to a more controllable number and to eliminate codes that were similar to other codes (Creswell, 2012:245). The ideal number of codes, according to Creswell (2012:245), had to be between 25 and 30, which I adhered to. I reduced the number of codes by going back to my data and eliminating codes that did not answer my sub-questions.

Step 3:   In this step different themes emerged for each sub-question by comparing codes with one another. I grouped similar codes into emerging

themes (Creswell, 2009:186). For example, peer attachments and educator–learner attachments were all classified under the theme *stories promote attachment* for sub-question 1*.* I moved back and forth among the data constantly comparing my codes to review my coding in order to refine my themes for each data set (Merriam, 2009:175). Figure 4.5 gives an illustration of how I grouped codes into emerging themes.

CODES

Stories encourage learners to value peers

Learners copy problem-solving in stories

Learners act as leaders

Life lessons enchance learners' positive qualities

Positive educator-learner interaction

Stories are familiar

Encourage identification with cultural heritage

Learners are excited about the stories

Stories provide relaxation

Retelling of stories for relief

EMERGING THEMES

Stories promote distraction

Stories promote life skills

Stories promote attachment

Appreciation of resources within Africentric culture

Figure 4.5 Grouping codes

Source: Creswell (2009:186)

Step 4:   As explained above, the themes found in one piece of data (e.g. Focus group interview 1) were compared with the data from the same data source – in this case other focus group interviews – to form one main list of all the themes from one data set. The same process proceeded with the other data sets. The three main lists were compared with one another to find similarities and to incorporate them into a single master list. The master list also contained a table for the inclusion criteria (Tabak et al., 1991:388) for every sub-theme to be considered (see Addendum E for the inclusion criteria). Duplicate themes that were discovered were refined in this process. This process also allowed me to check whether I had missed themes or needed to re-label themes (Merriam, 2009:180).

Phase 4	• Themes or descriptions of data

I used the themes that emerged from the data to generate a detailed description of EALCs' experiences of the Rm2R intervention strategy as a pathway to resilience for orphaned South African learners and for EALCs themselves, as well as recommendations to address frustrations experienced during the Rm2R intervention. In this phase I was able to present my findings through themes and sub-themes that answered each sub-question.

Phase 5	• Interpret the meaning of themes or descriptions

The final phase was an interpretation of the data. This entailed comparing the descriptions of EALCs' experiences of the Rm2R intervention strategy as a pathway to resilience for orphaned South African learners and for EALCs themselves to existing, relevant literature. In other words, I considered my findings critically in order to comment on what aligned with existing literature, what conflicted with what is known and what is noted in the literature, but not reported in my findings (Loots, 2010:305). Finally, by integrating the answers to the sub-questions I generated a composite answer to the primary question: What is the value of providing EALCs with a ready-made intervention tool to support EALC resilience? I was able to comment critically on the usefulness of the Rm2R intervention and other ready-made intervention tools to enhance EALCs' and learners' resilience.

4.3.7 Quality criteria

The term "quality criteria" refers to the steps taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the research process and the resulting findings (Nieuwenhuis, 2007a:113). I aimed to enhance the trustworthiness of my research by using the five principles of credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and authenticity as outlined by Guba and Lincoln (2005:146) and Lincoln et al. (2011:108).

4.3.7.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the accuracy of the findings in qualitative research (Mertens, 2005:254). A detailed description needs to be given of the participants and the research process to ensure that the data are credible in terms of participants' realities (Schurink et al., 2011:419). The following credibility checks were used in my study:

- ✓ Credibility was ensured by prolonged engagement (for one year) in data generation through focus group interviews, research diaries and the draw-and-write-technique with two groups of participants.

- ✓ Data generation continued until data saturation was reached (Creswell, 2009:175-176; Greeff, 2005:294).

- ✓ By comparing multiple sources of data and the themes emerging from these data sets I was able to elaborate on and collate the experiences of lay counsellors when using the Rm2R intervention. In this research I compared the visual and narrative data and transcripts by comparing the categories found in each piece of data in order to collate categories found in the general data (De Vos, 2005:347; Mertens, 2005:426) and in so doing presented well-founded findings (see section 4.3.3).

- ✓ An audit trail of my analysis of EALCs' experiences (transcripts, narrative data and visual data) was documented (see Addendum D).

- ✓ I verified my findings by checking some of them with participants and a member of the SANPAD research team (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:277). Also, within my study I compared participants' drawings with their explanations of the drawings to verify my further interpretation of them (Theron et al., 2011a:56). Findings that I was unsure of in terms of what the participant meant were confirmed and/or elaborated on by the participant.

4.3.7.2 Transferability

Transferability in qualitative research depends on the degree of similarity between the context of the current research and that of subsequent research,

i.e. whether the research findings can be transferred to other situations involving similar participants (in this case, lay counsellors) (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:277; Mertens, 2005:256). A rich description of the data, the participants and the process contributes to scientific knowledge and gives an in-depth understanding that allows other researchers to gauge how transferable the current research findings might be to other research situations (Mertens, 2005:256). To deal with this issue I did the following:

- ✓ I provided a table of the demographics of the EALCs (see Table 4.1).

- ✓ I provided a table of the risks faced by the learners that the EALCs worked with (see Addendum J).

- ✓ I described the research steps that I followed in depth (see section 4.3.4).

- ✓ I also provided multiple accounts (see Chapter Five) of lay counsellors' experiences of the Rm2R intervention (De Vos, 2005:347; Mertens, 2005:256).

4.3.7.3 Dependability

Dependability in qualitative research parallels reliability with regard to quantitative data (Mertens, 2005:253). If a study is dependable, then if it were redone with similar participants in another context, similar findings should be found (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:278). I did the following to assure that my study is dependable:

- ✓ The dependability or believability of the data was ensured by documenting the research process and keeping all the evidence accruing from the process in an attempt to facilitate replication. I described the pre- and post-drawing procedures and methods in sufficient detail (see section 4.3.4). I included brief audit trails of open and axial coding in Chapter Four (see section 4.3.6) and Addendum D to make my coding process transparent and to ensure dependability.

- ✓ I also provided rich descriptive data in a deep and complex interpretation of my findings and ensured that the findings and how they were reached were accurately portrayed (Bryman & Bell, 2007:156).

- ✓ Furthermore, themes that derived from the data generation methods were constantly cross-checked to ensure the dependability of the data findings (Creswell, 2009:190–92).

4.3.7.4 Confirmability

Confirmability relates to objectivity in the interpretation of the data (De Vos, 2005:347). In other words, it is concerned with others confirming the data and findings. I did the following to assure that my study is confirmable:

- ✓ I strived to stay objective and ensure that my own subjective interpretations of the lay counsellors' experiences were not imposed on their interpretations of their own experiences. Some of the lay counsellors checked my findings to ensure that my interpretations of their experiences were objective.

- ✓ The reflexivity in terms of the lay counsellors' research diaries allowed me to gain insight into and an understanding of my own and their assumptions, and how I interpreted the data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:1; Mertens, 2005:553).

4.3.7.5 Authenticity

Authenticity refers to ensuring a balanced view of all the participants' perspectives, views and beliefs regarding the Rm2R intervention and that some participants' views and beliefs did not dominate (Guba & Lincoln, 2005:156). I did the following to assure that my study is authentic:

- ✓ I took care to ensure that all participants' viewpoints and experiences were taken into account (Mertens, 2005:258) in order to give a balanced and fair analysis of their experiences of the Rm2R intervention strategy.

- ✓ Ontological authenticity is present when the researcher ensures that all data are correctly portrayed (Mertens, 2005:258). A register of all data

obtained was kept in a computerised system and a hard copy in a filing cabinet as proof of the results and to ensure the authenticity of the raw data. Data were also checked by participants to ensure their authenticity.

✓ Catalytic authenticity refers to the extent to which research can stimulate further action, in this case because of the knowledge that participants gained through the Rm2R intervention (Lincoln et al., 2011:122; Mertens, 2005:258). In my research catalytic authenticity was pursued by engaging in an inquiry process with the participants subsequent to the present study to find out if they had continued with the reading of traditional stories and whether the stories had been a vital tool in helping them to empower learners (Mertens, 2005:258).

4.4   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations were important to ensure that participants were not harmed (Flick, 2007:123; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:101. This research is part of the Rm2R project that has been authorised by the North West University ethical committee (see Addendum F) and the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) (see Addendum G).

The ethical issues described below were considered cardinal while conducting my research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:101–4; Strydom, 2005:58–59; Terre Blanche et al., 2006:67). In the discussion below the focus is on the participants, i.e. the educators acting as EALCs, and I make no comment on the secondary participants – the learners with whom they worked – because these learners were not the focus of my study. However, in my training of the participants I took care to encourage their ethical interaction with the learners. This included avoiding harm, respecting the concept of voluntary participation, gaining the learners' assent and their parents'/caregivers' written consent, and obtaining the permission of the principals of the respective schools. Assent, consent and permission were based on the provision of relevant information about the nature of the project. The participants were trained to explain to the learners that they would participate in groups, meaning that the other participating learners would know they too had listened to the stories. The participants were instructed not to make known the names of the participating

learners in their diaries or in the focus groups. The GDE's permission covered the participants' use of Rm2R in the schools where they interacted with small groups of learners. The participants were also supported (by me and my promoter, a registered educational psychologist) to use the Rm2R intervention constructively and for the well-being of the participating learners (see step 2 in section 4.3.4).

4.4.1 Avoidance of harm and debriefing

Care should be taken to ensure no physical or psychological harm comes to participants in studies (Gibbs, 2007:101). In my study participants (i.e. the EALCs) were carefully monitored through weekly discussions to ensure that no emotional harm was caused during the research process. Potential emotional risks were discussed with them beforehand. For example, if some participants themselves were orphaned it might have been an emotional challenge to discuss their experiences in the context of the Rm2R intervention. Given that participants were interacting with orphans in the course of using the intervention, the discussions might have been challenging because they might have been a catalyst reminding them of unresolved or painful feelings. I invited participants to my office and asked them to indicate if they experienced any part of their participation as harmful, but none did. During the focus group interviews I ensured that participants did not disclose information in a way that could potentially harm either themselves or other participants (Strydom, 2005:58–59). My formal training as a school counsellor facilitated this process. I debriefed participants at the end of the focus groups by asking them to give me feedback on their personal experience of the process and the ways in which it affected them, and to consider what they had gained from their participation and whether there was anything relating to their research experience that left them feeling in need of further support or discussion. The participants responded positively and needed no further assistance and so I concluded that they were comfortable with the research experience.

4.4.2 Informed consent

Informed consent means that participants are provided with enough information to enable them to decide if they want to participate in a study or not (Gibbs,

2007:10; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:101–2). In terms of my study, informed consent incorporated information that included a description of the study, an explanation of the activities involved, the time frame of the study, an explanation of participants' right to withdraw at any time, a discussion of possible risks and the assurance that information would remain confidential (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:101–2). Informed consent also means that participants agreed voluntarily to participate without physical or psychological coercion (Christians, 2011:65). Informed consent was obtained from the participants (see Addendum C for the letter of information and the consent form). The research process and its purpose were discussed in detail with the participants before the commencement of the research (including gaining consent from caregivers and schools) (Strydom, 2005:59–60). No deception was involved in explaining the purpose of the research and all information was honestly and accurately presented to the participants (Christians, 2011:65).

4.4.3 Autonomy and respect for participants

During research, the autonomy of participants should be respected and therefore personal information should not be revealed unless consent to do so is given (Christians, 2011:66; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:102). In my research respect for participants (Terre Blanche et al., 2006:67; Weijer et al., 1999:277) was maintained at all times by adhering to the following principles. Participants participated in all research activities without having their identities disclosed as a result of my assigning numbers to each individual. In my study I assigned abbreviations for each participant and data set to ensure confidentiality (see section 5.1). Participants also participated voluntarily and could withdraw from the research process at any time. The participants were students at the same university where I am a lecturer and if they were not willing to participate in the research they were not penalised. This was emphasised when I approached students to request their voluntary participation.

4.4.4 Beneficence

Beneficence occurs when the researcher attempts to maximise the benefits that the research will afford to the participants in the research study (Terre Blanche et al., 2006:67), as well as avoiding harm to participants (Christians, 2011:66).

The researcher and the ethics committee have to consider the relative risks against the benefits that the study might bring to participants. In my study, the potential benefits outweighed the risks (Terre Blanche et al., 2006:67). Participants were provided with a helpful tool to assist learners in their own school context (Wood et al., 2012b:225) and also developed their counselling skills through the self-reflective process of this research. However, at times some participants experienced more stress than others. This occurred when they had heavy workloads and consequently experienced their participation in my research project as burdensome extra work. I and the other participants encouraged those participants who felt overwhelmed to remember that they were gaining skills and that their participation could make a contribution to how other EALCs would be supported to use the Rm2R intervention. They were also reminded that they could leave the research programme without penalty. None did, perhaps because they believed in the benefits.

4.4.5 Honesty with professional colleagues

All conclusions drawn from research need to be valid and true (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:102). In my research it is possible that the participants' reflections and descriptions might have been tailored to suit their needs or to impress me, but I respected their accounts as valid and true. When I reported the limitations of my study I reminded readers that its findings were rooted in subjective data (Creswell, 2009:92). I worked hard to make my report honest and authentic. To help me analyse the authenticity of my data I met with my study leader on a regular basis; she reviewed my research process and acted as my peer debriefer. Creswell (2007:12) also urges researchers not to plagiarise any information from resources. Plagiarism includes not acknowledging resources used and not laying out sources in a scientific way. My report went through a process named "Turn it in" to ensure that no plagiarism took place (see Addendum K).

Furthermore, honesty with professional colleagues also means fully reporting results in a communication style that most other researchers will understand. My thesis was edited by a professional language editor to ensure a clear communication style that the general research community would understand. Reports on research findings should include a discussion of the practical

significance of the study to members of the wider research community to ensure that they can use these findings in their own research (Brown & Hedges, 2009:373; Creswell, 2007:12; 2012:24). For this reason, other than the results being made available through the normal academic processes, I offered to make copies of my study available to the participants (all the EALCs) and to their schools. I also made my findings practical by providing the EALCs with the Rm2R intervention that they can use with at-risk learners. Once my thesis has been examined, my recommendations for refining the Rm2R intervention will be added to the Rm2R website (http://readmetoresilience.co.za).

4.4.6 Ethical data generation procedures

According to Section 37(2) of the Health Professions Act (1974), academic staff of a university engaged in research or staff of a school engaged in research in education are allowed to perform certain tasks if properly trained in the methods used to conduct research (Allan, 1991:21). In my study I was trained by an experienced researcher to use the various data generation methods. My competence was also advanced by being part of my study leader's SANPAD project, which gave me access to an extended team of researchers and to SANPAD's regular training sessions for PhD students working on funded projects. Lastly, because I am also a professional counsellor, I have experience in conducting interviews and working with groups. This meant that I was comfortable conducting the focus groups and could generate an atmosphere that was comfortable for participants too.

4.4.7 Ethical data analysis

Ethical principles need to be adhered to when analysing data. Gibbs (2007:101) states that applying ethical principles during analysis enhances the quality of a researcher's analysis. What follows is some of the ethical principles I applied when conducting the data analysis (Gibbs, 2007:101–3):

- *Transcription*: All transcriptions should be kept confidential and the transcribers should be aware of the ethical principles (Gibbs, 2007:102). The language educator that helped me to translate the explanations of the participants was made aware of this ethical principle of confidentiality and was asked to adhere to it. Furthermore, the use of numbers for

participants rather than their names concealed their identities even from my supervisor. The transcripts and data will be kept for five years in a locked cabinet.

- *Feedback*: Feedback to participants should be done in a way that conceals the identities of the other participants as far as possible and in a manner that is understandable to the participants. The focus group interviews used in my study limited the possibility of doing so, however. Feedback should also show the participants that their contributions made a positive impact on the study (Gibbs, 2007:102). In my research participants received verbal feedback on my results and could ask for a copy of my thesis. Participants were told that their experiences and recommendations will be included in the "guidelines" section of the Rm2R website (http://readmetoresilience.co.za) as soon as my study has been examined and concluded.

- *Publication*: Researchers should be aware that their findings could be used by other researchers in the future. Researchers should ensure that they do not incorporate any information about any participant in their research that could be detrimental of the participant in the future (Gibbs, 2007:103). In my findings I took the utmost care not to disclose information that may harm participants in the future. Furthermore, no false information was provided of fabricated to support my theory in any way (Christians, 2011:66).

4.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I provided a detailed account of the qualitative, phenomenological design of my study and of the participatory data generation methods I used. I showed that I attempted at all times to make apposite choices and that I implemented these choices in ethical, trustworthy ways. My methodological choices resulted in rich findings, which I present in the next chapter, Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH FINDINGS
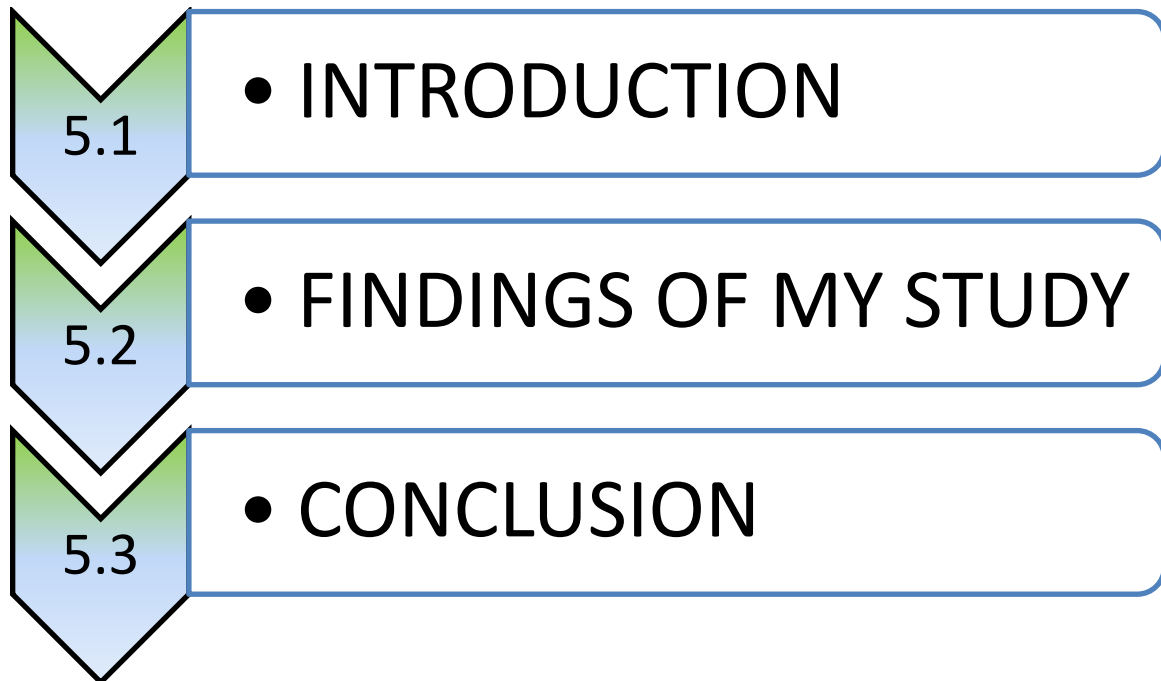
Figure 5.1 Overview of Chapter Five

5.1   INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I discussed the research process by presenting my choice of research design and the data collection methods employed to conduct this study. I explained my stance as researcher and reflected on the ethical considerations that guided the study.

In this chapter I report the results of the study in terms of themes that emerged subsequent to data analysis. I use the EALCs'/participants' direct quotations from focus groups (where T indicates the transcript used and L the line or lines used in the data set), drawings made by the participants (where PreD indicates the pre-drawing and PostD the post-drawing used; P the participant whose drawing was used; and N the narrative explanation of the drawing used) and research diary notes (where RN indicates the research notes used; P the participant whose notes were used; and L the line or lines used in the data set) to support the themes identified for the secondary questions.

5.2   FINDINGS OF MY STUDY

In my explication of the themes, I refer to the number of participants as indicated below:

- "few" refers to between one and four participants;

- "many" refers to between five and nine participants; and

- "most" to between ten and 16 participants.

I also use the terms "EALCs" and "participants" interchangeably. Although I am aware that there are grammatical errors in the quotes included below, I have not corrected these in order to preserve the essence of what the EALC reported, none of whom were English mother tongue speakers (see Table 4.1).

5.2.1 Rm2R intervention as a pathway to resilience for orphaned black South African learners

The following sub-question guided my study: What are EALCs' experiences of the Rm2R intervention strategy as a possible means of encouraging the resilience of orphaned black South African learners? Figure 5.2 offers a visual summary of EALCs' experiences of the Rm2R intervention strategy as a means of encouraging the resilience of orphaned black South African learners.
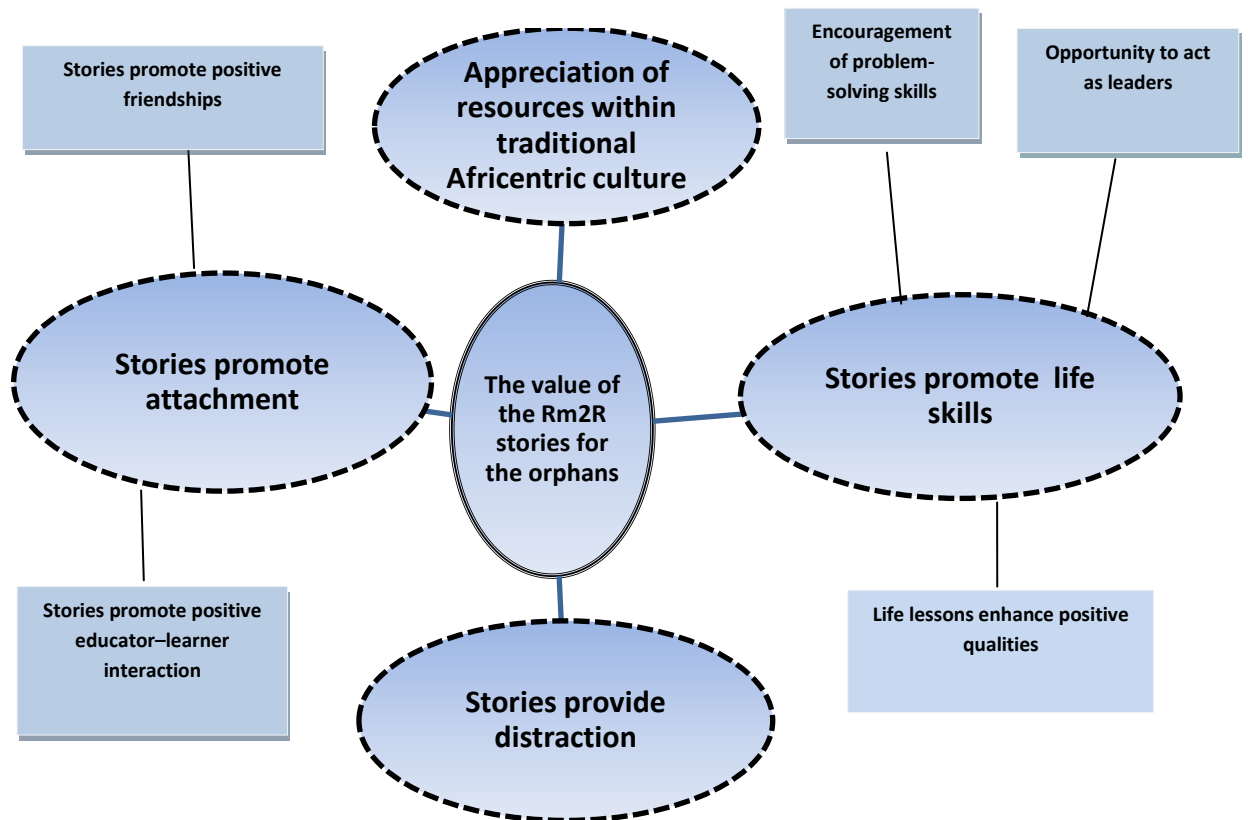
Figure 5.2 The value of the Rm2R stories for orphaned black South African learners

The four themes that explain the value of the Rm2R intervention for EALCs in terms of its promotion of resilience among orphaned learners are interrelated. The EALCs did not prioritise any one theme. A detailed explanation of each theme follows.

5.2.1.1 Theme 1: Stories promote life skills

The life-skills-promoting potential of stories refers to the intra- and interpersonal skills that the stories appeared to promote in the learner that reflect an ecological-transactional understanding of how an individual's resilience processes are influenced by his/her environment (see section 2.3). In particular, listening to and internalising the lessons of the stories encouraged problem-solving skills, provided opportunities to learn life lessons that enhanced personal traits, and gave learners opportunities to act as leaders. Each of these outcomes will be presented below.

i.   Sub-theme 1.1: Encouragement of problem-solving skills

Many EALCs thought that learners related to how the characters in the stories were able to solve problems and this encouraged the development of learners' own problem-solving skills. A few participants said that the learners reflected on how characters solved problems, which motivated them to improve their own problem-solving skills. For example, in Focus Group Interview 3 one participant commented:

> The one learner came back to me and said to me that she can remember what I said about the story and she thought about it ... the learner said that she wanted to be like the characters in the story that can solve their own problems (T3, L8–10).

Other participants commented on how the learners were able to imitate and/or learn from the problem-solving skills illustrated by the characters in the story. This was deduced from learners' description of possible solutions to events in the stories. For example, in Focus Group Interview 4 one participant said:

> I tried to talk to them but sometimes I did not need to talk to them. When you read the story they can gather out of the story what to do in certain situations ... they have proven to me that they can solve problems for themselves by the manner in which they describe possible solutions for a scenario in the story (T4, L32–34).

Other participants commented that learners gleaned alternative ways of thinking about difficulties and this supported their dealing with problems. In Focus Group Interview 4, for example, a participant stated: "I think the stories should be told to them because it activates their minds ... this helps them to decide for themselves" (T4, L158–59). Another example can be found in Drawing 5.1. In her post-test drawing, Participant 8 drew attention to how the stories nurtured learners' capacity to think creatively and divergently. In the drawing "thinking clouds" illustrated how the stories activated learners' thinking.
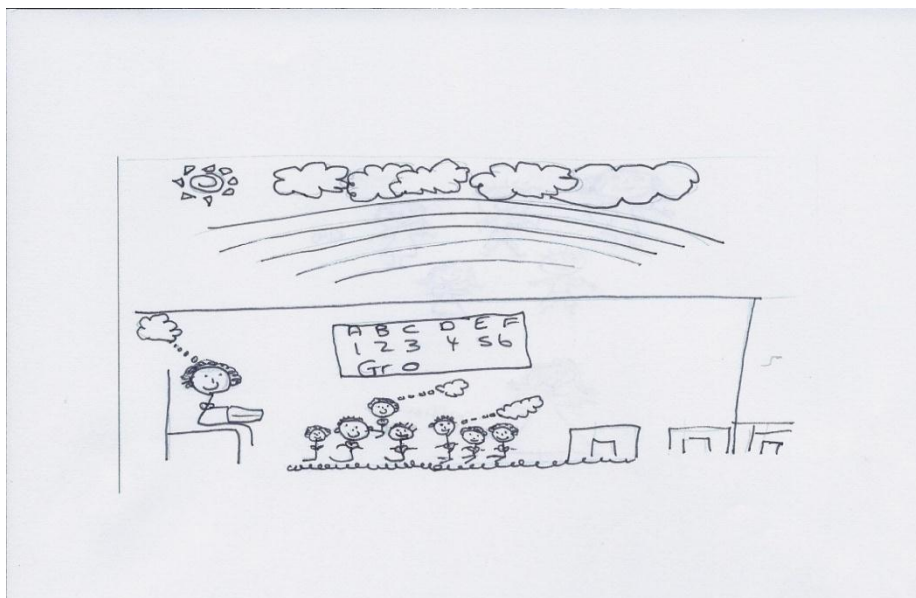
Drawing 5.1 Stories prompt thought processes in learners and EALC (PostD, P8)

Participant 8 explained her drawing (see Drawing 5.1) as follows: "My drawing shows how the learners were able to think about the stories when I told it to them … they were able to think in different ways after the stories were told to them ... about how to approach problems" (PostD, P8, N).

Not only did the stories appear to promote reflection and alternative solutions in the individual learner, but the EALC reported that the stories nurtured collective problem solving. This often related to exotic characters in the story and how learners debated the appearance of these characters before reaching consensus. For example, in Focus Group Interview 1 a participant remarked: "If I did not show pictures they started to form arguments about how the characters looked like and then they started to agree. They would say the cannibal is half human and half monster" (T1, L129–32). The participants reported that the process of arguing and reaching consensus honed learners' problem-solving skills.

A few participants expressed confidence that learners would be able to solve their own problems in the future. They based this on the learners' interpretation of possible solutions for difficult circumstances in the stories. For example, in Focus Group Interview 1 a participant vocalised this observation as follows:

The learners knew what were the right thing to do to resolve the problems in certain situations in the story ... they were also able to relate certain problematic situations in the stories to their own lives ... which will help them with problem-solving in the future (T1, L237–39).

ii. Sub-theme 1.2: Life lessons enhance positive qualities

The stories that the learners listened to included implicit lessons about how personal and collective actions, attitudes and beliefs shaped outcomes. In many of these stories there was a message about the importance of positive qualities in achieving positive outcomes. Thus, life lessons that enhance positive personal qualities refer to life lessons learnt by the learners via the stories that promoted positive personal qualities, such as self-confidence, or perseverance, or being hopeful. Positive personal qualities potentially enable learners to negotiate for resources from their ecosystem (see section 2.3).

This sub-theme was represented by many participants' verbal comments during focus group interviews. For example, a participant commented in Focus Group Interview 1 about a learner employing the stories' life lessons to gain more self-confidence:

There was a very shy child in my class and it looks like the stories helped her in a positive way ... she was able to talk to me about the stories and started to open up in front of the class (T1, L359–62).

The participant concluded that

the stories might have helped the learner gain self-confidence to be less shy – when she heard the story of the ugly girl in Story 22 being able to be a leader despite being ugly ... she learnt a valuable life lesson to overcome her insecurities (T1, L363–65).

Most participants' research notes supported their observation that the learners' learnt life lessons that encouraged positive attributes. In general, participants reported that learners demonstrated sympathy, perseverance and hope either in response to the characters and situations in the stories or to one another, and were of the opinion that these qualities would promote learners' pro-social behaviour and resilience. For instance, participants made the assumption that

learner's had internalised the life lessons in Stories 1, 7 and 13 if they were able to show sympathy. In this regard, Participant 7 wrote in her research notes (i.e. diary) that "they did not like it that the buck was bullied ... they showed sympathy for the characters, I know they understand the life lessons in the stories and will not do the same [i.e. bully] to others" (RN, P7, L139–40).

Similarly, a few participants reported that many learners anticipated a good ending while the stories were told to them. For example, in Focus Group Interview 1 a participant reported: "I could see on their faces in the middle of the story that they are anticipating a good ending and they know there is a life lesson to be learnt" (T1, L500–2). The EALC associated this with learners being encouraged to be hopeful: their story-related anticipation spilled over into positive anticipation regarding their own difficult lives and encouraged them hope that their own lives would improve. In her diary, Participant 15, for example, commented:

> The learners learn a lot of life lessons out of these stories and are able to learn that the story will end good ... I think it gives them hope that in their own lives it will also end good and things will work out (RN, P15, L22–23).

iii. Sub-theme 1.3: Opportunity to act as leaders

The stories provided the opportunity for learners to act as leaders within their groups. Such opportunities related to occasions where, because the stories were not illustrated, some learners could take the lead by describing characters in the stories in a positive manner to other learners in the group. For example a participant in Focus Group Interview 1 commented on a learner describing characters in the story to his peers. She described the learner as being proud of his role as leader:

> There was one boy that was clued up and took the lead. He led the group on how the monster looked like and he said that it had big teeth. He could create a picture for the others. The others just agreed and put a name with it. He was the main brain behind it ... this motivated the others to listen later to him when he explained one of the life lessons he learnt out of the story to the other learners ... I could see that he was proud of himself that the others listened to him (T1, L142–46).

Opportunities to take the lead also came from learners who did not feel frightened when the stories involved quite savage characters, like cannibals or powerful thugs. A few participants mentioned this in their research notes and emphasised that learners who showed bravery against such vicious characters (e.g. in Stories 2, 3, 4 and 12) modelled hardiness that made other children admire them. For example, Participant 8 diarised that a couple of learners were regarded as leaders and heroes when they encouraged the others to think that

> the cannibals have ugly faces and the learners are not scared of the cannibals ... they all expressed their bravery especially after one or two children said that they are not afraid of the cannibals ... the learners saw them as brave and taking the lead (RN, P8, L39–41).

A few participants also considered the potential of the stories to encourage future leadership roles. They expressed how acting as leaders when the stories were told might help the learners to act as leaders in their own lives and to be brave and solve their own problems. For example, Participant 7 noted in her research diary: "showing leadership now when I tell the story might help the children in their own lives one day to be brave and take a leadership role against their problems" (RN, P7, L42–44). Similarly, Participant 16's comment about learners imagining how they would be proactive in their community had they been in control suggests that the stories encouraged lessons that potentiated leadership in the future: "they had a discussion about how happy they were that Ngcede won and they talked about what they would have done if they were the leader. They would build houses and clean the earth" (RN, P16, L154–57).

5.2.1.2 Theme 2: Stories provide distraction

Most participants experienced the stories as promoting positive respite for the learners or diversion from stressful situations. The observation was related to EALCs noticing occasions when learners were excited about hearing the stories, wanted to retell the stories to others in the community and wanted to come to school to attend the story-telling sessions. They concluded that the stories offered distraction, and even relief, from daily difficulties because the

children to whom they were telling the stories seldom had reason to be excited or something positive to share with others.

The EALCs experienced learner animation and relaxation in connection with the stories. For example, in Focus Group Interview 1 a participant said: "They are excited and enjoyed story time ... they forgot about their troubles and could just be relaxed" (T1, L20–22). In Focus Group Interview 1 a participant described learners' willingness to share the stories with other members of the community. This might suggest the value of the stories to the learners as a form of distraction. She explained: "The learners must have been excited about the stories because they told the stories to other learners ... I think they enjoyed telling the stories to forget about that which hurts" (T3, L82–83). Similarly, Participant 15 also confirmed in her research notes learners' willingness to communicate the stories to other community members as a positive leisure activity: "the learners were excited to pass the stories on at home to have something pleasant to do" (RN, P15, L132).

A few participants also reported that despite the learners' many challenges, they came to school and did their school work. For example, a participant in Focus Group Interview 4 said: "The learners do their school work and come to school despite their home circumstances" (T4, L88–89). The participant came to the conclusion that the learners experienced the stories as a recreational activity they enjoyed and that this motivated regular attendance: "The learners' commitment to school was encouraged by not wanting to miss out on hearing the stories ... the stories were something they could enjoy" (T4, L90–91).

There was also evidence in the participants' drawings of learners' positive emotions and excitement after hearing the stories. Drawing 5.2 represents the post-drawing of Participant 6 about her experience of being an EALC. In the drawing the learners and educator have smiling faces that show positive emotions after the Rm2R intervention. Participant 6 explained her drawing as follows: "The stories helped the learners to relax and think about things that make them happy" (PostD, P6, N).
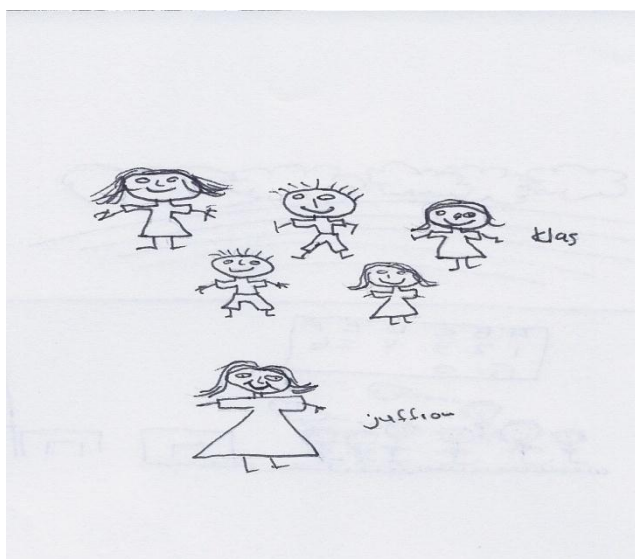
Drawing 5.2 Learners and educator are positive (PostD, P6)

5.2.1.3 Theme 3: Stories promote attachment

Stories that promote attachment refer to a positive bond that the stories promoted among learners, and between learners and educators. These positive attachments give the individual the ability to overcome adversities in her/his life in order to adjust positively to life's challenges (see section 2.4.1). The sub-themes of positive friendships and positive educator–learner interaction are discussed below.

   i.   **Sub-theme 3.1: Stories promote positive friendships**

Stories that promote positive friendships refer to positive relationships with friends and positive emotions towards friends. This sub-theme was represented in most participants' diarised research notes. Most participants reported that learners emphasised the value or showed appreciation of their friendships after hearing certain stories (e.g. Stories 4, 5, 7 and 16) that contained themes that foregrounded the importance of supportive friendships. For example, Participant 9 wrote: "When they left the class after hearing the story they looked happy and lovingly towards their friends" (RN, P9, L67–68). Participant 4's comment confirmed that learners were encouraged by the stories to appreciate their attachments to friends: "The learners were happy that they have good friends after hearing the story" (RN, P4, L88–89). Participant 14 also wrote that

the learners told her that "no person or animal can live without friends" (RN, P14, L46–47).

Many participants recognised that learners did not only cherish their attachments to friends, but also realised the importance of their support in difficult times. For example, Participant 12 wrote that the learners commented after she told Story 5 that "we all need good friends to be there for us in difficult times, without them life is more difficult" (RN, P12, L332–34). A few participants noted that learners undertook to keep their friendships strong in the future. For example, Participant 13 wrote in her research diary: "The learners promised me to keep their friendships tight after I told them a story about friendships ... the learners were excited to know that there are good friends to help them in difficult times" (RN, P13, L39–40).

ii.   Sub-theme 3.2: Stories promote positive educator–learner interaction

Stories that promote positive educator–learner interaction refer to stories facilitating the development of a more positive relationship and/or interaction between the educator and learner. In the post-drawings there was evidence of positive educator–learner interaction after the stories had been told. In some instances a comparison of participants' pre- and post-test drawings suggested that prior to their using the Rm2R intervention EALCs experienced difficulty in relating well to their learners. For instance, in her pre-drawing (Drawing 5.3) Participant 1 explained that she felt she was not able to bond with the learners: "I do not feel that I can have a good relationship with the learners because of my lack of not having the means to do so" (PreD, P1, N). Drawing 5.4 represents Participant 1's post-drawing and shows positive change, i.e. she uses a positive symbol (i.e. a heart) to link herself and the learners. The heart encapsulates the EALC and the learners, and strongly symbolises attachment. Participant 1 explained her post-drawing as follows: "The drawing explains the love between a teacher and her learner. The learners are comfortable with her and respect her" (PostD, P1, N).

Drawing 5.3 EALC is distant from learners (PreD, P1)
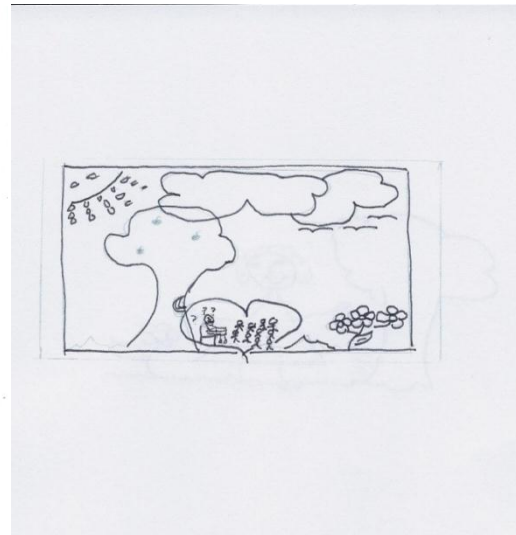
Drawing 5.4 Stories facilitated attachment (PostD, P1)

Most participants commented in the focus group interviews and their research notes about the more positive relations between themselves and their learners after the stories were told to the learners. In Focus Group Interview 1, for example, a participant reflected on how the stories facilitated a trusting attachment between her and the learners when she told the stories: "the stories enable me to spend time with them, communicate and form a trusting bond with them" (T3, L329–31). In Focus Group Interview 4 a participant expressed how the trusting bond enabled her to assist learners in need: "I can build a trusting relationship with the learners when I tell them the stories ... they trust me and open up to me about their problems" (T4, L65–66). In their research notes many participants confirmed the nurturing and compassion that a healthier attachment to learners promoted. For example, Participant 10 wrote: "The stories are a valuable method to build relationships with the learners. To care for them, understand them and to help them" (RN, P10, L120–22).

Another participant gave an example in Focus Groups Interview 3 of how he was able to draw on the characters in the story as a strategy to form a positive relationship with a learner. The participant explained:

> you will use a character in the story and associate it with one of the learners. When you see the child you will call him that character that might have been a hero in the story. When you do that their confidence

grows and they will come to you when they have a problem (T3, L292–97).

5.2.1.4 Theme 4: Appreciation of resources within traditional Africentric culture

Cultural traditions and resources often promote the resilient functioning of individuals and contribute to the vitality and continuity of a community of people (see section 2.4.2). Most of the participants reported that the stories were familiar to some learners. Others learnt more about Africentric traditions (such as traditional healers - Story 9 - and chiefs - Story 11) that they were not familiar with. In general, however, the EALCs experienced that the stories encouraged learner identification with traditional Africentric culture, bonding them to a collective cultural identity (albeit traditional) and making them aware of enabling cultural traditions and resources. For example, one participant wrote: "I noticed that some learners have heard these stories before but also that other learners not knowing about their own traditions were able to learn about their traditions and hopefully identify with their cultural roots" (RN, P10, L54–55). Participant 14 wrote in her research notes: "The learners seemed comfortable with the stories and could relate to their own culture when they heard the stories ... I think it does enhance their sense of cultural identity" (RN, P14, L80–81). Furthermore, the EALCs were of the opinion that the stories' Africentric characters reminded the learners that their traditional culture offered resources that could potentially enable them. For example, during Focus Group Interview 3 a participant commented:

> The learners know about sangomas and were able to recognise the value of the character in the story which relates to their own lives ... learners learn that there are tools for them to use ... this helped them to know that they have cultural roots that gives them strength in difficult times (T3, L377–79).

However, some participants were of the opinion that some isiZulu-/Sesotho-speaking learners were estranged from their cultural heritage for various reasons, including having adopted Eurocentric values following urbanisation,

the achievement of privileged socioeconomic status or parental acculturation. For example, in Focus Group Interview 2 the group concurred when a participant commented:

> It is very difficult to assume that because the learners are black that they know their traditions of their culture. Some learners are with richer families and are exposed to Western medicine. They do not know about sangomas and witch-doctors ... this causes some difficulty when we tell these stories (T2, L76–78).

The lack of exposure to traditional figures was also confirmed in a few isiZulu-/Sesotho-speaking participants' research diaries. Participant 16 wrote: "Some of the learners did not know what a Sangoma was, I think it is because they were not exposed to them because they do not live in the townships anymore" (RN, P16, L195–96). Although this acculturation complicated the story-telling process, many EALCs reported that when learners were not familiar with traditional Africentric culture the stories presented an opportunity for isiZulu-/Sesotho-speaking learners to learn about and perhaps identify with their traditional cultural ancestry.

5.2.2 The Rm2R intervention encourages EALC resilience

In addition to wanting to understand how the RM2R Intervention enabled learners, I was interested in answering the following sub-question: What are EALCs' experiences of the Rm2R intervention strategy as a possible means of encouraging their own resilience? Figure 5.3 offers a visual summary of EALCs relating to how using the Rm2R intervention strategy included processes that promoted EALC resilience.
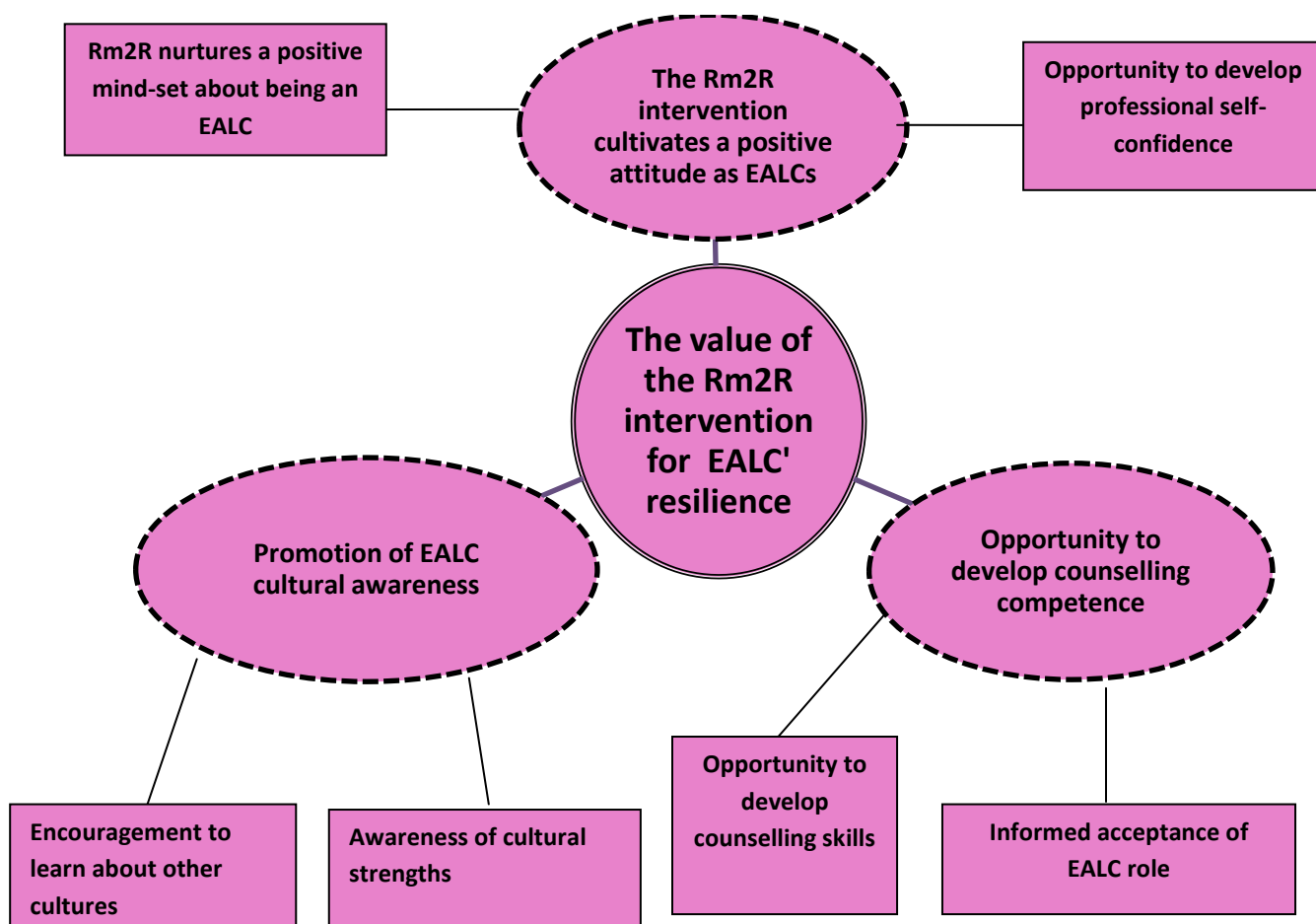
Figure 5.3 The value of the Rm2R intervention for EALCs

The three themes that explain the value of the Rm2R intervention for EALCs were of equal importance for them. The themes presented below will answer the sub-question referred to above.

5.2.2.1 Theme 1: The Rm2R intervention cultivates a positive attitude as EALCs

Growth in a positive attitude refers to participants who expressed their personal growth as a result of using the Rm2R intervention in terms of having more self-confidence in helping learners and a positive mind-set about being an EALC. Within Theme 1, EALCs reported that their implementation of the Rm2R intervention offered an opportunity to gain self-confidence and a positive mind-set about being an EALC, which will be discussed below.

i. Sub-theme 1.1: Rm2R nurtures a positive mind-set about being an EALC

EALCs expressed and displayed a (more) positive attitude towards wanting to be an EALC after the Rm2R intervention. Positive symbols (e.g. tree, flowers, sun and smiling faces) drawn by the participants show that they experienced positive growth. Many participants only displayed a few or none of the positive symbols in their pre-drawings (e.g. those made by Participants 1, 2, 5, 8, 9 and 10). In Participant 9's explanation of her pre-drawing (see Drawing 5.5) she explained that she felt inadequate in terms of helping her learners, hence the grimace without other positive symbols and the words: "I feel uncertain and helpless on how to do counselling, for that reason I drew only myself" (PreD, P9, N). Also, in Participant 10's pre-drawing (see Drawing 5.7) the participant felt overwhelmed and confused. Drawing 5.7 is also drawn without positive symbols. Participant 10 explained her pre-drawing as follows:

> I feel I should be doing more to help my learners, but I am so overwhelmed by the number of learners who need my help. I know I can help but I sometimes I need help to do all I can to help learners to become better human beings (PreD, P10, N).

Drawing 5.5 Inadequate as EALC   **Drawing 5.6 EALC showed positive**

(PreD, P9)   **growth (PostD, P9)**

However, in many participants' post-drawings (e.g. the drawings of Participant 1, 2, 5, 8, 9 and 10) more positive symbols were displayed. For example, Participant 9 drew a tree and flower in her post-drawing and she was smiling (Drawing 5.6) and Participant 10 drew a sun with everyone smiling (Drawing 5.8). Participant 9's and 10's written explanations of their drawings also confirmed a positive growth in mind-set about being an EALC. For example, Participant 9 wrote:

> The tree in my drawing symbolises the knowledge I gain and I grow to become a healthy big tree. The flower symbolises the prettiness I transform to after the values I have gained from the stories. I feel more positive about wanting to be a lay counsellor (PostD, P9, N).

A similar positive attitude about being an EALC was also conveyed by Participant 10's written comment: "Reading the stories were a good stepping stone for me and the learners. I was able to see the positive things in my life again like wanting to help the learners and to let the sun shine" (PostD, P10, N).

Drawing 5.7 EALC is over-whelmed (PreD, P10)
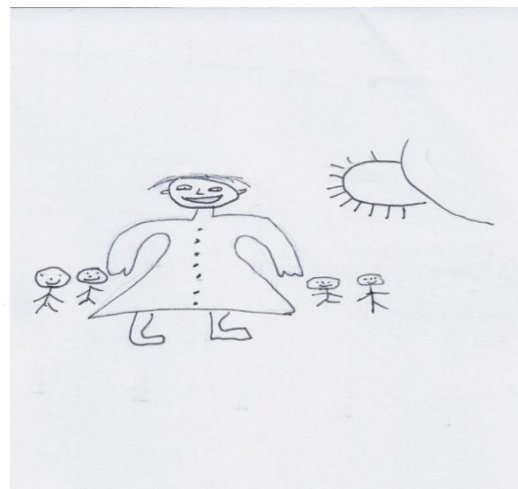
Drawing 5.8 EALC showed positive growth symbols (PostD, P10)

ii. **Sub-theme 1.2: Opportunity to develop professional self-confidence**

Opportunity to develop professional self-confidence refers to the participants who developed self-assurance with regard to their role as EALCs and became

more comfortable in helping learners. A comparison of many participants' pre- and post-drawings showed how the participants grew in professional self-confidence. For example, Participant 6's pre-drawing conveyed a lack of self-confidence in her ability to support learners, and even some distress. This was conveyed by the facial grimace and absence of learners in the drawing (see Drawing 5.9).
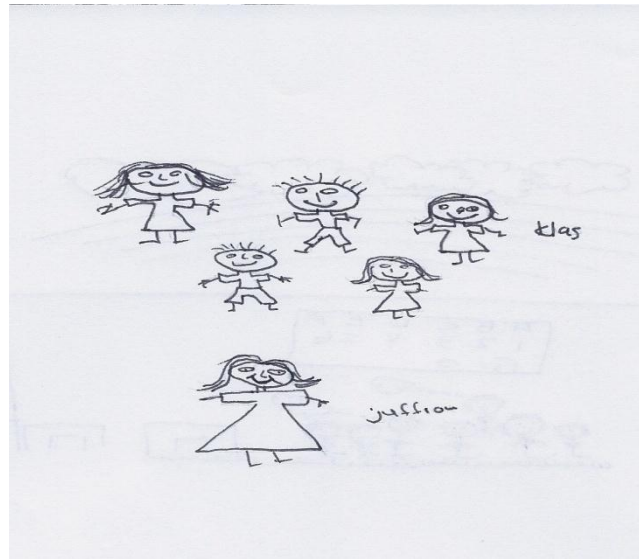
Drawing 5.9 Distressed EALC (P6, PreD)   **Drawing 5.10 More self-assured EALC (P6, PostD)**

Lack of self-confidence and distress were confirmed in Participant 6's written explanation of the drawing when she wrote:

> Lay counselling is scaring me and I am uncertain. I am not comfortable to help someone with problems and to give advice. I am scared that I am going to give wrong advise and that I don't identify problems in the right way. I am also scared that I am not going to remember important verbal information or that I observe him in the wrong way. I am also scared that the person's problems are too big for me to handle (PreD, P6, N).

Participant 6's post-drawing showed increased self-confidence (see Drawing 5.10), as evidenced by a smile that replaced the grimace and the addition of smiling learners. The participant also wrote about her growth in self-confidence when she explained her drawing: "The learner's positive reactions made me

also positive and to believe in myself, it showed me that I can make a difference" (PostD, P6, N).

Many other participants' post-drawings (e.g. those made by Participants 1, 5, 8, 9, 11 and 16) confirmed a growth in their self-confidence and courage in terms of offering counselling after the Rm2R intervention. For example, Participant 16 explained her post-drawing as follows, emphasising how much more confident she felt as a lay counsellor following her use of the Rm2R intervention: "I feel brave now and able to help others because of this experience. I did not think [before the intervention] I will be able to be a counsellor and help others" (PostD, P16, N). Participant 11 reported renewed energy and self-confidence after the Rm2R intervention. This is apparent in the upright posture of the standing individual in the post-drawing (see Drawing 5.12) instead of the seated position of the individual in the pre-drawing (Drawing 5.11). Additionally, in the pre-drawing he was behind a table, which could suggest that he needed to have a supportive structure, or even a barrier between himself and his learners (see Drawing 5.11). Participant 11 explained his pre-drawing as follows: "The distance between me and the subject is a small table that makes me feel more comfortable in counselling" (PostD, P11, N). Growth in self-confidence was confirmed in his written explanation of his post-drawing: "I can confidently stand up and be counted among lay counsellors with my shoulders upright. Now I am beginning to have self-confidence and I feel empowered. I will be able to handle counselling better with this technique" (PostD, P11, N).

Drawing 5.11 Unsure EALC (PreD, P11)

Drawing 5.12 Confident EALC (PostD, P11)

Similarly, other participants confirmed that they were less uncertain and stressed after the Rm2R intervention. They linked this to having gained more self-confidence. For example, Participant 5 explained in her post-drawing (see Drawing 5.13) that "I feel more comfortable talking to learners about certain issues. The learners can now talk to me more easily because I am not stressed anymore. I have more self-confidence as a lay counsellor" (PostD, P5, N).

Drawing 5.13 More relaxed EALC (PostD, 5)

In Focus Group Interview 3 a participant confirmed a similar growth in self-confidence. Furthermore, this growth in self-belief as a counsellor encouraged her to consider other ways in which she could help learners and even to visualise herself engaged in supporting learners in the long term:

> I gained confidence. I started to become more interested in counselling through this process. I even thought that when I retire I can help learners with problems if it is possible. I can do something with the learners with learning problems or problems at home (T3, L335–38).

Many participants confirmed a feeling of self-confidence in their research notes too. For example, Participant 3 recorded:

> It gives me confidence to use the stories more, to explain school work as well. It makes me feel good about myself when I am able to do something, like reading the stories. Especially when I see that I am making a difference to the lives of the learners I am working with (RN, P3, L118–20).

5.2.2.2 Theme 2: Opportunity to develop counselling competence

Participants reported that their use of the Rm2R intervention promoted counselling competence. By this they meant that it gave them the opportunity to develop more counselling skills through exposure to the Rm2R intervention, made them more competent as EALCs and allowed them to identify with the role of an EALC. Two sub-themes informed the theme of counselling competence, i.e. opportunity to develop counselling skills and informed acceptance of the EALC role. Each is detailed below.

i.   **Sub-theme 2.1: Opportunity to develop counselling skills**

The EALCs were grateful because the Rm2R intervention gave them an opportunity to develop their counselling skills. All the participants were honours students and in the course of acquiring this further qualification they were formally taught lay counselling skills, but many of them had scant opportunity to practise these skills.

Many participants drew question marks in their pre-drawings (e.g. those made by Participants 1, 3, 5, 7, 8 and 9). These symbolised the confusion they felt because they were uncertain how to utilise the counselling skills they had been given (see Drawing 5.14, made by Participant 3).
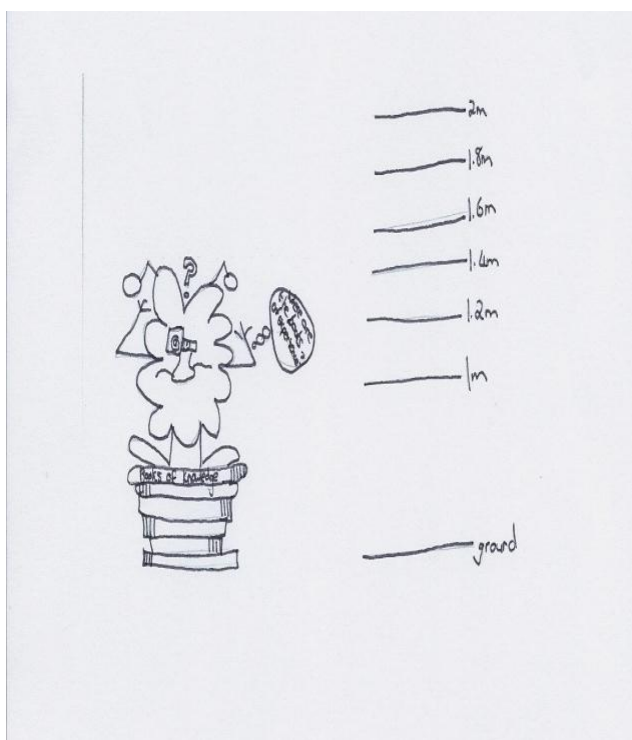
Drawing 5.14 EALC's uncertainty   **Drawing 5.15 Empowered EALC**
(PreD, P3)   **with answers (PostD, P3)**

As illustrated in Drawing 5.14, Participant 3 explained in his pre-drawing that he felt that he did not get the opportunity to use his counselling skills, even though he had some knowledge (symbolised by him sitting on a pile of books):

> I feel I need to gain more experience about counselling. Now I have the knowledge but don't get opportunities to use the knowledge in a certain situation. I need to grow more to be able to use my skills and knowledge to help learners (PreD, P3, N).

Participant 3's written comments changed in his post-drawing and communicated that he felt more competent in using his counselling skills. This was evident in the light-like lines emanating from the head and broad smile of the character in his drawing, symbolising clarity in his post-drawing (see Drawing 5.15). He commented:

> I am better in evaluating situations and to give a helping hand. Previously I would avoid helping. I would want to reach out more to learners to give them advice and to give them support. I can also identify

more quickly what mistakes me and colleagues make and try to change it immediately (PostD, P3, N).

Similar positive changes were noted in the drawings of Participants 1, 5, 7, 8 and 9. All these drawings emphasised participants' growth in terms of their counselling skills.

Not only did participants feel more competent in utilising their counselling skills, but the Rm2R intervention stimulated creative ways of exercising their skills for a few participants. For example, Participant 7 wrote how she could utilise the stories to develop her interaction skill with the learners:

> The Rm2R intervention helped me to use what I know about counselling and getting experience in using it. I have done courses on counselling but I did not know what to do with the knowledge. I was able now to tell stories and use it to start a conversation on a topic. The learners could come and talk to me and I could help them if they needed my help (RN, P7, L150–52).

Similarly, a few participants recognised the value of the stories as an initial tool when they were uncertain how to help learners in need. For example, in Focus Group Interview 4 a participant stated:

> When learners come to me with their problems I feel as if there is a dark cloud around me in the room. This learner has high expectations of me helping him or her and I do not have the tools to help. When I used the stories I was able to lift most of the dark cloud in the room because at least I had something to use (T4, L300–4).

However, a few participants realised that there is a need to provide EALCs with more intervention tools in order to increase their professional competence. In Focus Group Interview 1 a participant expressed this as follows:

> Interventions like the Rm2R helps me to have something to use. I am not a professional and need something to support me in the counselling process. If I have more tools I will be able to use the skills I already have in a safe way (T1, L593–95).

Another participant in Focus Group Interview 3 was of a similar opinion: "The Rm2R stories were an easy way to do counselling. If we can have more techniques like this, we will be able to help children more" (T3, L289–91).

Participant 13 illustrated in her post-drawing (see Drawing 5.16) the difficult lives of her learners and how she felt she had been able to make a difference to them. In her explanation she communicated that although she had been supported by the use of Rm2R to enable her learners, she still felt that because she was not a professional counsellor her help was somewhat inadequate:

> Some learners come from poor homes with no food and clothes and I am different from them. I formed a bond with the learners by telling the stories. I feel it in my heart and cry for them. It makes me smile afterwards to think that I was able to help them. I wish I could help them more, but I do not have the professional skills of a counsellor to help them. I cannot and that is why I feel pain in my heart, but I have hope to reach that goal. By telling them the stories, I can ask them afterwards to tell me about their life. At least I can do something positive by reading the stories (PostD, P13, N).
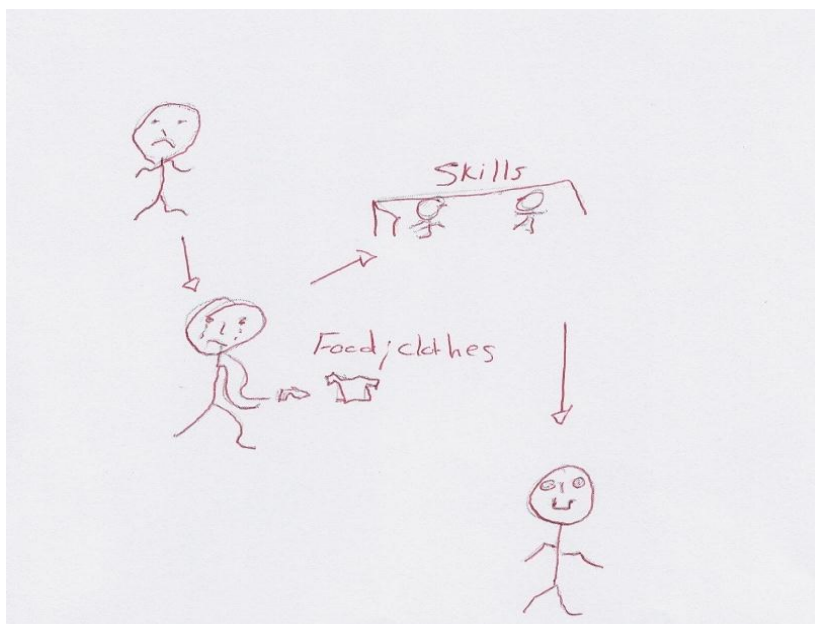
Drawing 5.16 EALC helped learners by using the Rm2R intervention (PostD, P13)

Sub-theme 2.2: Informed acceptance of EALC role

Informed acceptance of the EALC role refers to participants learning to identify with or accept their role as EALCs. Many participants reflected that in the course of using the Rm2R intervention they had learnt to see being a counsellor as part of who they are, and they learnt via their experience to understand what it meant to be an EALC and that this was a multifaceted and complex role.

Before the Rm2R intervention a few participants did not draw and describe any specific EALC role, even though there were some positive symbols in their pre-drawings. After the Rm2R intervention a few participants reported a growing acceptance of a caring and supportive role. For example, although Participant 2 felt positive about herself and her ability to help in the description of her pre-drawing (see Drawing 5.17) – "I feel good about myself and want to help other people" (PreD, P2, N) – she did not describe her role as an EALC as well as she did after the Rm2R intervention in her post-drawing (see Drawing 5.18):

> I feel that after the Rm2R intervention I know more what it means to be a lay counsellor at school. It means to gain knowledge and skills to be competent in helping my school. I realise the tremendous need for lay counsellors to fulfil the role of helper. I feel I am able now to ask my school how I can be of assistance to them (PostD, P2, N).
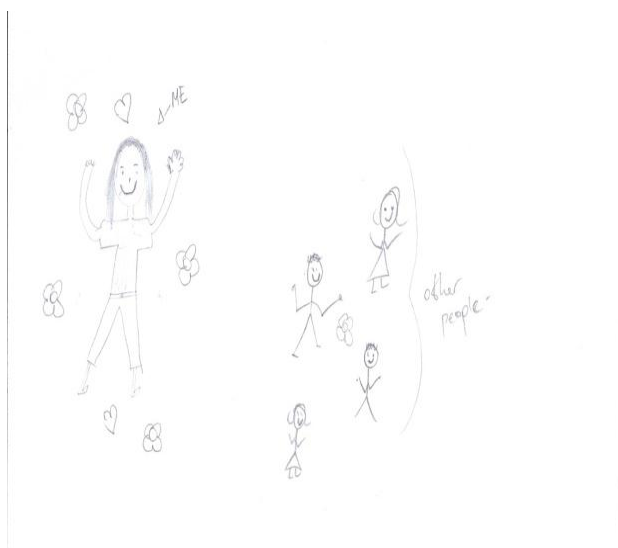
Drawing 5.17: EALC in non-distinctive role (PreD, P2)

Drawing 5.18 EALC in supportive role (PostD, P2)

Similarly, in her post-drawing (see Drawing 5.19), Participant 12 described how she had come to accept her role as an EALC and to understand that it required vigilance and empathy:

> A lay counsellor is a person who is not a professional counsellor. I am as a teacher always with learners who need me to try and solve their problems because they trust me. In the past it was very difficult for me to counsel learners, but now I have gained competence because I gained experience of learners that I could help heal. My drawing shows that when I am at school I am a shoulder to cry on. I must pay attention to learners who look sad and bitter. Those that have tears I have to console them and give them hope (PostD, P12, N).

Drawing 5.19 EALC accepts caring role (PostD, P12)

Furthermore, the Rm2R intervention not only promoted acceptance of a helper role, but also provided lived experience of what it means to be an EALC. Participant 11 commented in his research diary: "I feel now that I know more what a lay counsellor is after the Rm2R intervention. You must have basic counselling skills and be able to refer when needed" (RN, P11, L70–71). A few participants also realised the importance of being an EALC in the course of implementing the Rm2R intervention. In Focus Group Interview 4 a participant expressed her ownership of being an EALC: "I did not know how important our role is before this intervention. I realise now that I must take my role as lay counsellor seriously and that I have a part to play in helping our learners in difficult times" (T4, L289–91).

Participant 15 drew "thinking clouds" to illustrate her acceptance of the multifaceted nature of being an EALC (see Drawing 5.20).
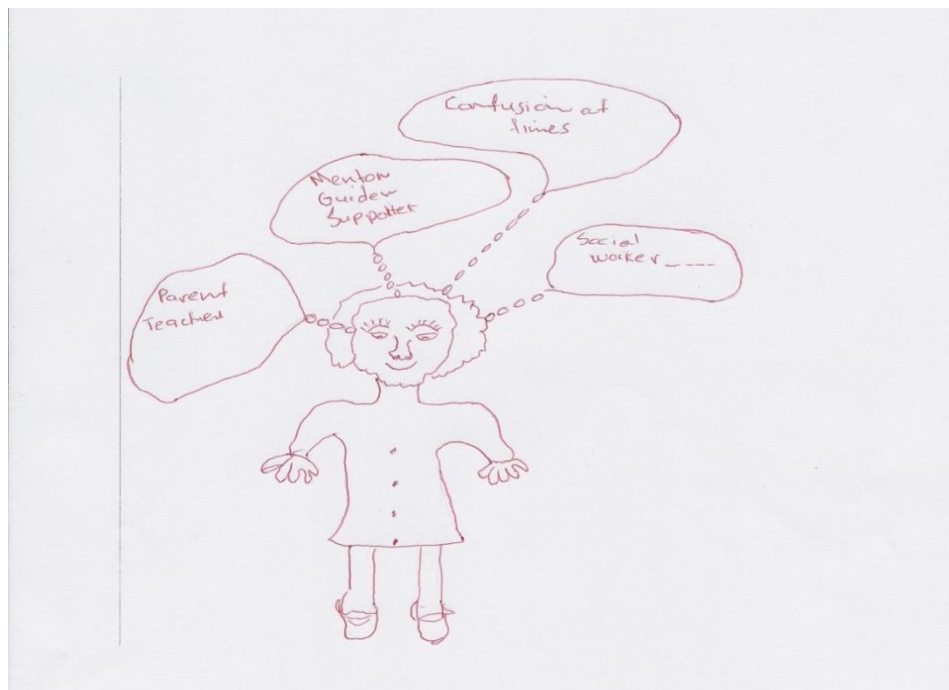
Drawing 5.20 The different roles of the EALC (PostD, P15)

Participant 15 explained her drawing in the following way:

> The Rm2R intervention made me realise that as a lay counsellor in the school context you must be able to be a parent, teacher and social worker. Someone who guides and supports and be a mentor for the children in the school. Although it can be confusing to do it all ... I have grown to accept these various roles (P15, PostD, N).

Although the participant recognised the different roles of the EALC after using the Rm2R intervention, she also recognised the need for continued support.

5.2.2.3 Theme 3: Promotion of EALCs' cultural awareness

The Rm2R intervention promoted EALCs' willingness to be more culturally competent and/or created an awareness of their cultural strengths, making them aware of which values they could draw on to strengthen themselves and learners. To show cultural awareness means that the individual identifies with his/her cultural roots and engages in critical self-reflection to examine his/her personal bias and assumptions and to understand other cultural values and

show openness to other cultures (see section 3.3.2.1). Within Theme 3 the sub-themes of an awareness of cultural strengths and the need for cultural competence are presented below.

i.   **Sub-theme 3.1: Awareness of cultural strengths**

Most isiZulu-/Sesotho-speaking participants reported a sense of awareness of their cultural strengths that was reawakened when they worked with the stories that made up the Rm2R intervention. Many isiZulu-/Sesotho-speaking participants verbalised familiarity with the stories. They had come to know the stories via their own schooling or as part of their family traditions. For example, during Focus Group Interview 3 one participant recalled:

> I remember hearing these stories in school. At school it was even part of our school work, we had to come to school and tell a traditional story for marks. I was delighted to hear the stories again that I grew up with (T3, L480–87).

A few isiZulu-/Sesotho-speaking participants also expressed a sense of awareness of their cultural strengths after using the stories. For example, Participant 14 noted:

> I am comfortable with the stories because it is part of my culture and family background ... I am proud of it ... in our culture we learn about sangoma's as well as the values like love that is reflected in some of the stories ... it is all part of our traditions ... I feel that I am able to overcome any problem when I am reminded of my traditions (RN, P14, L82–88).

Many participants also found comfort in their religion as part of their cultural upbringing, as reflected in the stories of the Rm2R intervention. In telling the stories, an Afrikaans-speaking participant and a few isiZulu-/Sesotho-speaking participants were reminded of the religious values that were part of their cultural roots and how this strengthened them. For example, a participant stated in Focus Group Interview 4 how the stories reminded him of the religious values his grandfather taught him as part of what their culture valued:

These stories reminded me again of the values I was brought up with. When I told the stories I could recall my grandfather telling me the stories and I remember him telling me to always love myself and others ... the stories we told the learners also has these values that my grandfather told me about ... this makes me want to be closer to God ... I realise where my strength comes from now (T4, L292–96).

A few EALCs reported that their communities and families had taught them to be religious and to draw on their faith, particularly in challenging times. The stories reminded a few EALCs that their religion could supplement their strength and support them as EALCs (see Drawings 5.21 and 5.22). Participant 4 reflected as follows in her post-drawing (see Drawing 5.21):

The stories made me realise where I find my strength to do counselling ... I trust in God to direct me and lead me with every child. That is why I do a prayer and ask for direction in every situation. As God is holding me tight in His love, I also want to give His love to each child in my care and keep them safe in His love. In this way I want to help and support them in their hurt (PostD, P4, N).

Similarly, Participant 14 also illustrated how she found strength in the beliefs that are part of her cultural heritage when she drew a cross in the background of her post-drawing (see Drawing 5.22). Her written explanation of her drawing confirmed where she found her strength to do counselling: "I find my strength in my beliefs. It helps me to find the strength to do counselling" (PostD, P14, N).
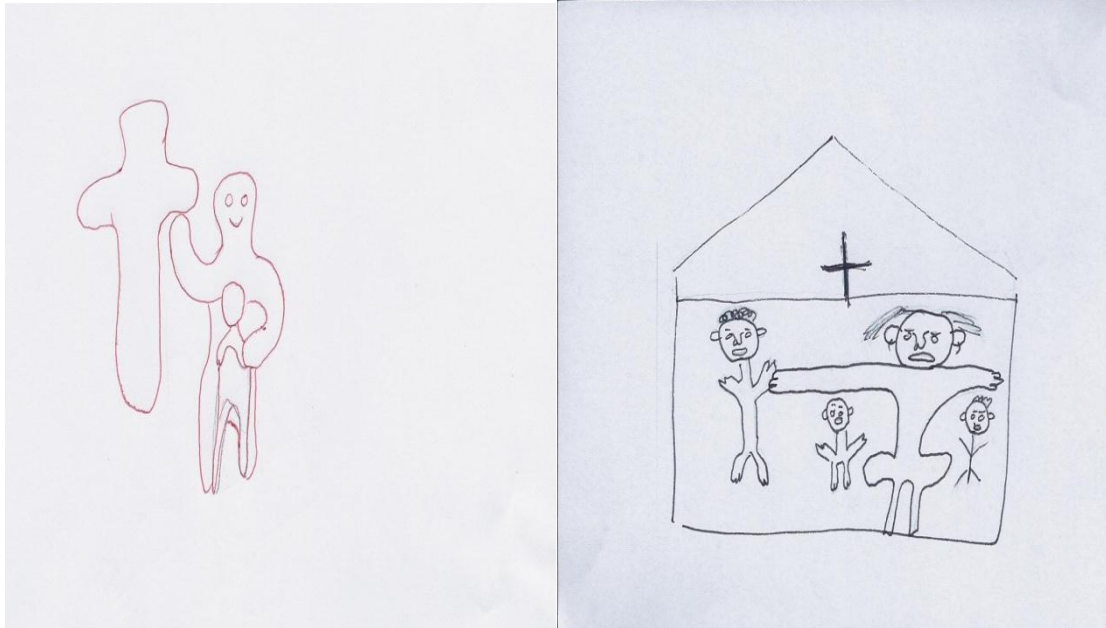
Drawing 5.21 (PostD, P4) **Drawing 5.22 (PostD, P14)**

EALCs found strength in religion as part of their cultural heritage

ii. Sub-theme 3.2: Encouragement to learn about other cultures

Most Afrikaans-speaking participants reported in their research notes and focus group interviews that the Rm2R intervention inspired them to learn more about Africentric cultures. This willingness might have been prompted by their unfamiliarity with the Africentric contents of the stories that make up the Rm2R intervention. During the focus group interviews, for example, a few Afrikaans-speaking participants verbalised that they had struggled initially to be positive about the contents of the traditional African stories included in the Rm2R intervention. Because of their own lack of understanding of Africentric culture – i.e. that Africentrism encourages spiritual and religious values (Lambert et al., 2005:321; Phasha, 2010:1248) and that traditional healers can support people to achieve harmony with their cosmos (Hammond-Tooke, 1989:103; Levers et al., 2011:58; Muthukrishna & Sam, 2011:83) – they were initially biased against traditional characters like the sangoma (Story 9) and witch-doctor (Stories 12 and 20). For example, in Focus Group Interview 2 one participant explained how her experience of the Rm2R intervention had encouraged tolerance and a desire to extend her knowledge of other cultures:

> I want to learn more about other cultures ... when I started the Rm2R intervention I did not want to tell these stories because it is against my

religion. I do not believe in sangomas and witch-doctors and was not keen on telling the stories to the children. I then realised that all cultures have characters that are different: for example white people have Red Riding Hood and the wolf that eats her alive, maybe black people will be afraid of those characters and say it is against their religion ... now I am not afraid anymore of the characters like sangomas because I realise that it is part of black culture. Maybe I should learn more about black culture then I will be able to read it [the stories] with a clear conscience and not let my religious beliefs influence me in the telling of these stories (T2, L153–63).

This participant may not have been aware of her cultural bias had she not used the Rm2R intervention.

Participant 7 initially also showed resistance to the idea of telling the stories with traditional characters and also because she believed that this was against her Christian principles. She felt that the characters would influence learners in a bad way and that she did not want to expose them to this. However, following her experience of the Rm2R intervention she expressed a willingness to be more flexible. She symbolised this in her post-drawing (see Drawing 5.23) by depicting herself reading to learners.

Drawing 5.23 EALC overcame her religious restrictions (PostD, P7)

She explained her post-test drawing as follows:

The concept of telling the stories as a method is that it is a good method. In the beginning I would have liked to tell my own stories that have

Christian principles, because I did not feel comfortable with the traditional characters in the stories. They influence learners in a bad way and I did not want to be responsible for exposing them to the characters. I am now more open to the idea of telling these stories because I know it does not threaten my values. I need to learn about other cultures. Stories are a winner with children and help them to think about the principles and they enjoy it. It is an excellent method. It is definitely a good method (PostD, P7, N).

Similarly, as part of her explanation of post-test drawing (see Drawing 5.18 used previously in this chapter) Participant 2 explained: "The Rm2R intervention helped me to understand the black South African culture" (PostD, P2, N). This willingness to understand other cultures better was confirmed in most participants' research notes. For example, Participant 1 wrote that telling the stories had broadened her knowledge of her learners' traditional culture and that this had encouraged her own thirst for further knowledge about cultures other than her own:

I also realised that they [black learners] like it when I talk about "chief", it is part of their traditional language ... when I told one of the stories I realised that cows play a big part in their culture ... I want to learn more about other cultures (RN, P1, L272–74).

5.2.3 The need for the refinement of the Rm2R intervention

In order to address frustrations during the Rm2R intervention to better equip EALCs, I answered the sub-question: What refinements do EALCs recommend (if any) for the Rm2R intervention in order to address frustrations they experienced during its implementation?

Figure 5.4 offers a visual summary of how the Rm2R intervention needs to be refined to address frustrations during the implementation of the Rm2R intervention.
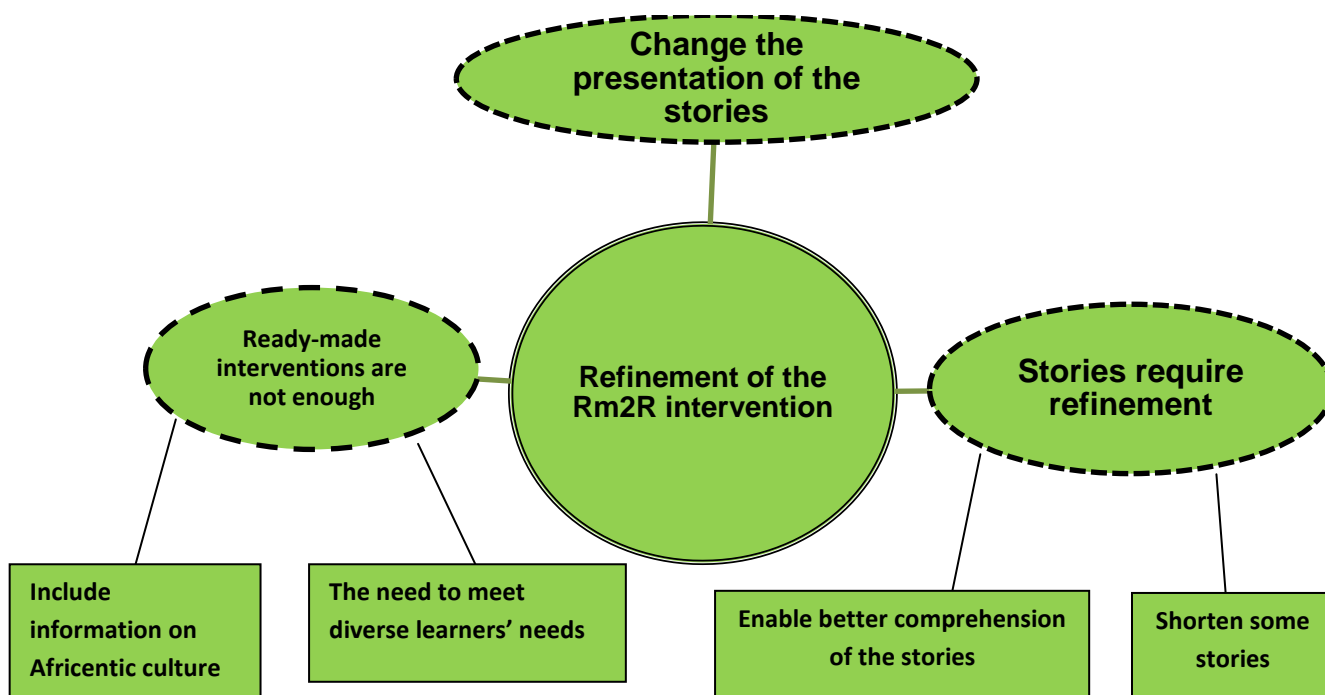
Figure 5.4 Refinement of the Rm2R intervention

The three themes of "stories require refinement", "change the presentation of the stories" and "ready-made interventions are not enough" are discussed below.

5.2.3.1 Theme 1: Stories require refinement

The refinement of the stories refers to recommendations made by the participants relating to how the stories can be improved in terms of language, length and format/genre. To refine the stories, changes should be made in terms of these aspects. The suggested improvements to the stories will be presented below in terms of three sub-themes, namely "enable better comprehension of the stories", "change the format/genre of the stories" and "shorten some stories".

   i.   **Sub-theme 1.1: Enable better comprehension of the stories**

In this study educators told the stories in English (even though the stories were available in isiXhosa and isiZulu), mostly because they worked with groups of children that spoke diverse indigenous languages. EALCs also used English if they themselves could not speak an indigenous African language. However, not

all the group members were English speaking. In their experience, participants thought this sometimes impeded learner comprehension of the stories' contents. To enable better comprehension of the stories a few participants suggested that the stories be told in the learners' home language. A few participants also suggested that traditional African concepts that Westernised learners/educators are not familiar with should also be used in the learner's home language and explained. For example, Participant 7 wrote: "The learners do not understand English, they are too young to understand me. The stories should be told in their home language or at least I must use words in their language to keep their attention" (RN, P7, L58–59). The importance of learners hearing the stories in their home language was emphasised in all of the focus groups. Some participants even offered possible solutions:

It is important the learners understand the stories, I did not think mine always understood it when I told the stories in English ... what if we put the stories on CD in the childrens' home language so that they can better understand the stories (T2, L101–3).

Furthermore, a few Afrikaans-speaking participants experienced difficulty in explaining more traditional African concepts to learners and suggested that the stories include information on these Africentric concepts. For example, Participant 5 recorded the following experience in her research notes: "I did not know how to explain to learners what a cannibal, witch-doctor or sangoma was, maybe if the stories could include explanations of these concepts and the cultural history of these words it will make it easier for me" (RN, P5, L160–63).

ii. Sub-theme 1.2: Shorten some stories

Most of the Rm2R stories took about ten minutes to tell, but a few were longer (20–25 minutes). A few participants reported that the younger children were also not able to sustain attention during the telling of the longer stories. Therefore they recommended that these longer stories (e.g. Stories 12–15 and 19) be shortened. In Focus Group Interview 2 a participant expressed this need and her peers concurred: "Some stories are too long for the younger children, for example the story about Sithembile and her snake, they enjoyed the shorter

stories more ... maybe it should be shortened when the teacher tell these stories" (T2, L7–9). The need for shortening some stories was also confirmed in most participants' research diaries. For example, Participant 14 wrote: "I left out a lot of detail with stories 12–15, the learners seemed to understand it better when I shortened these stories" (RN, P14, L139–40).

5.2.3.2 Theme 2: Change the presentation of the stories

Altering how the stories were presented refers to participants' recommendation that the telling of the stories needed to be embellished creatively to enhance their message for the learners. Participants were instructed to tell the stories in a structured way, without including creative or dramatic adaptations, as was discussed in Chapter 4 (see section 4.3.4.).

Following their experience of just telling the stories without dramatising or embellishing them in other ways, the participants recommended that story-telling would benefit from including props (visual aids, artefacts or toys), or follow-up activities (like role-play, or question-and-answer time), or even dramatised narrating. For example, in Focus Group Interview 4 one participant explained this as follows:

> When I used pictures the learners were more attentive than the times I did not use pictures ... some learners are more visual and are more stimulated by what they see, even if you use stuffed animals. The learners like animals. I experienced this especially when I told them stories with animals in them (T4, L270–74).

Participant 8 recorded the following experience in her research notes, thereby illustrating the need to do more than just tell stories in order to guide learner meaning making in response to the stories: "I asked my learners to act out the story they just heard, it worked very well. They were able to show me what they have learnt and I could see that they understood the story" (RN, P8, L132–34).

Most participants felt that if they asked questions about the story afterwards they were able to ensure that learners understood the content and were more

likely to grasp the deeper or resilience-promoting meaning of the story. Participants suggested that thought-provoking questions be included with the stories. For example, a participant in Focus Group Interview 3 stated:

> I think that when I asked questions I was able to start a conversation with the children to see if they understood the story. If I did not ask questions they did not remember the story ... when I asked them the next time to tell me about the previous story, they could tell me most of the time about the stories if I asked questions ... however, I think they should include some suggestions for questions to be asked with each story (T3, L156–62).

Her peers agreed.

For many participants it was also important that the stories be told in a captivating way that included changing the tone of voice for the different characters and actually singing the songs that were contained in the stories. Participant 12 was able to sing the songs, which were well known to her, in her home language:

> It helped when I changed my voice when there was a different character, the learners also enjoyed it when I sang the songs and they could sing along with me ... I could sing the songs in my language of isiZulu and it was well known to me (RN, P12, L120–22).

A few Afrikaans-speaking participants felt they needed help with singing the songs, because singing songs were not part of the traditional culture that they grew up with and they made suggestions in this regard. For example, in Focus Group Interview 1 a participant suggested: "Why do we not put the songs on a CD so that the children can sing along, I really cannot sing and struggled a lot with singing to a tune" (T1, L207–8).

5.2.3.3 Theme 3: Rm2R intervention alone is not enough

   i.   Sub-theme 3.1: Include information on Africentric culture

Many participants suggested including information on Africentric culture as a means of overcoming the lack of knowledge about their own or others' Africentric culture. Many isiZulu-/Sesotho-speaking participants were of the opinion that the reason learners do not know their traditions is because black educators and parents have become acculturated, leading to their no longer teaching their children/learners about traditional African practices. For example, in Focus Group Interview 3 a participant said: "We as black teachers and black parents are exposed to other religions and traditions and do not teach or expose our children to the traditions of our ancestors ... however our older generation still believe in for example traditional healers" (T3, L243–45). An isiZulu-/Sesotho-speaking participant reasoned in Focus Group Interview 4 that another reason learners do not know their traditions is because their parents are very young and have children at a young age: "The black parents do not know their own traditions because they are so young themselves ... I taught some of the parents of the learners and they themselves do not care for their traditions" (T4, L51–53). For the reasons explained above, a few isiZulu-/Sesotho-speaking participants felt that it is important that learners, educators and parents should be reminded of or exposed to traditional black culture and its artefacts, like traditional stories or folktales. Participant 11 emphasised the need for such awareness and knowledge in his research notes:

> I feel that you should know about your own traditions. There are many teachers, parents and learners that do not know where they come from. We as teachers are suppose to know and must tell the learners and parents where they come from. Maybe the intervention could include some information on the traditions reflected in the stories (RN, P11, L64–66).

Furthermore, a few Afrikaans-speaking participants were of the opinion that if they understood other cultures by being provided with knowledge on traditional

Africentric culture, they would be able to understand the stories better. For example, an Afrikaans-speaking participant stated in Focus Group Interview 1:

> I want to learn more about other cultures, I think if we could be provided with the information to learn more about the learners' cultures we will be able to understand them better ... there is a difference in the teachers and the learners' cultures ... this is sometimes because we are different races (T1, L590–92).

If participants knew more about the traditional Africentric culture they would be more comfortable with the stories and would be able to also teach learners about their own traditions:

> There is a lot we do not know about the black culture. We will feel more comfortable telling these stories is we could receive courses in the black culture ... we will also be able to tell the learners about their own traditions (T2, L136–37).

The need to receive more knowledge about other cultures is confirmed in Participant 7's research notes when she wrote: "I need more knowledge about the black culture. I do not know why certain things happen in the stories, maybe then I will be able to tell the stories with more confidence" (RN, P7, L130–32).

ii.   Sub-theme 3.2: The need to meet diverse learners' needs

A few participants expressed the need for more practical experience to develop skills to be able to provide counselling to diverse learners (e.g. from different socioeconomic statuses, cultures and races) and learners facing obstacles (e.g. being orphaned). For example, Participant 1 reflected in her research diary:

> Although the Rm2R intervention is a good method to use and enable me to have a tool for counselling, I do not always know how to help the learners. I need some experience to learn to deal with learners. Every learner in our school is very different in terms of race, language and socio-economic background (RN, P1, L153–55).

Similarly, a participant stated in Focus Group Interview 2:

> I have learnt a lot with telling the stories to the learners, but I feel I am not able to answer their questions about losing a parent for example ... I do not know how to help them after I told them the stories .... Maybe if I could have more experience in helping learners I will be able to do better (T2, L227–30).

Participant 5 confirmed the obstacle of a lack of training in cultural competence when learners come from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and races:

> The children I worked with is very poor and a different race. I will never know what they are going through when I have food every day. I do not know if I offend the child with what I am saying to him, I wish I had more experience (RN, P5, L26–27).

Lack of counselling competence, particularly when working with learners who were different in some way to the EALCs, and the need for related training were further expressed in Focus Group Interview 1:

> I need to know what to do when I work with a child with a different cultural background.... We probably need someone giving us practical exposure ... maybe someone that has experience to show us at school how to help these learners (T1, L663–65).

5.3 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I presented my findings to sub-questions 1, 2 and 3. In the next chapter I will discuss sub-questions 1, 2 and 3 in the light of known literature and I will answer the primary question of the study. Suffice it to say, that the findings presented reflect the complexity of resilience processes and the many challenges facing EALCs. They also show the complexity of supporting EALCs using a ready-made intervention.

The primary question: "What is the value of providing EALCs with a ready-made intervention tool to support EALC resilience?" will be answered in the next chapter by synthesising the answers to the secondary questions. For this reason the findings section in this chapter included thematic answers to the

secondary questions. I will thus integrate the results of the study and discuss my findings against the background of existing literature to answer the primary question.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS
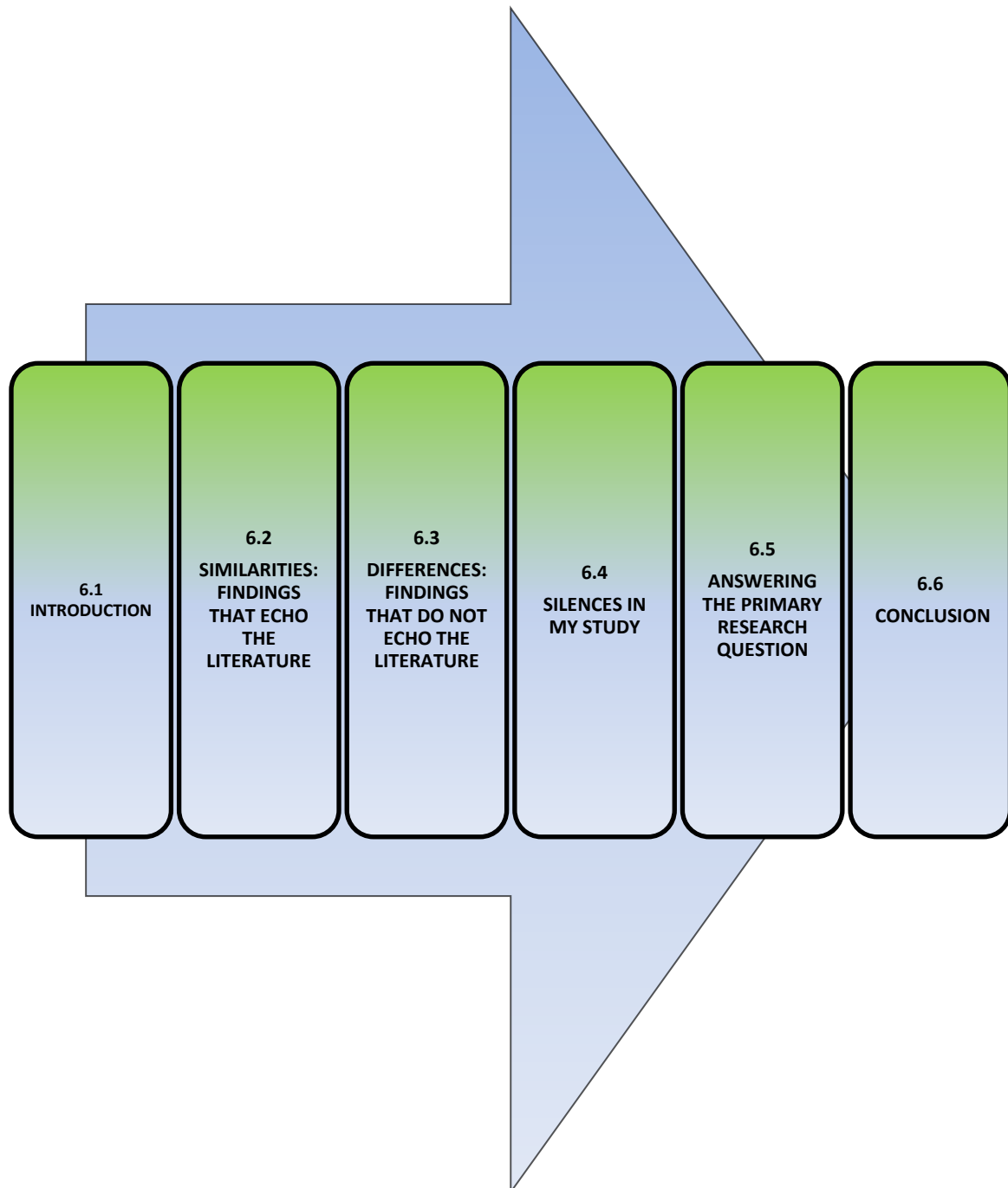
Figure 6.1 Overview of Chapter Six

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I compare the findings that emerged in answer to sub-questions 1 and 2 (see Figure 4.2) to the protective systems reported in the literature dealing with resilience. I do this in order to establish if the Rm2R intervention is a valuable tool to enable EALCs. Then I compare the findings that emerged in answer to sub-question 3 to what has been documented in the literature about effective interventions. I do this in order to understand what participants' frustrations relating to the implementation of the Rm2R intervention suggest about the value of providing ready-made interventions. Finally, I synthesise the findings and my discussion relating to sub-questions 1–3 to offer an answer to my primary research question concerning the value of ready-made interventions as a tool to improve EALCs' resilience. Figure 6.2 offers a visual summary of the themes that emerged in answer to each sub-question. These themes will inform the answer to my primary research question.

Opportunity to develop professional self-confidence

Rm2R nurtures a positive mind-set about being an EALC

Opportunity to develop counselling skills

Informed acceptance of EALC role

Shorten some stories

Awareness of cultural strengths

The Rm2R intervention cultivates a positive attitude as EALCs

Opportunity to develop counselling competence

Enable better comprehension of the stories

Promotion of EALCs' cultural awareness

Value for EALCs

Stories require refinement

Encouragement to learn about other cultures

The value of providing EALCs with a ready-made intervention

Operational frustrations

Change the presentation of the stories

Stories provide distraction

Value for learners

Stories promote attachment

Learners' appreciation of resources within traditional Africentric culture

Stories promote life skills

Ready-made interventions are not enough

Include information on Africentric culture

Stories promote positive educator–learner interaction

Stories promote positive friendships

Encouragement of problem-solving skills

Opportunity to act as leaders

Life lessons enhance positive qualities

The need to meet diverse learners' needs

Figure 6.2 Summary of themes that emerged from the study

179

The comparison has three parts, following Loots (2010:281) and as recommended by Eisenhardt (1989:546). I make sense of the themes that emerge by commenting on how my findings are similar to what has been previously documented; how they are different; and the silences in my findings, or what they fail to speak to.

6.2 SIMILARITIES: FINDINGS THAT ECHO THE LITERATURE

The following section has three parts: I first discuss how the EALCs' perceptions of the protective or resilience-promoting value of the Rm2R intervention strategy for orphans were similar to what the resilience literature has reported as mechanisms that protect children, including orphans. To do so I mostly draw on the literature reviewed in Chapter Two, but add more recent literature when applicable (Betancourt et al., 2013:423; Daniel & Mathias, 2012:191; Evans, 2012:177; Lee, 2012:165; Skovdal & Daniel, 2012:153; Skovdal & Ogutu, 2012:241; Thamuku & Daniel, 2012:215; Van der Brug, M., 2012:273; Van Dijk & Van Driel, 2012:283). Thereafter I discuss how the EALCs' perceptions of the protective or resilience-promoting value of the Rm2R intervention strategy for them personally and professionally were similar to what the resilience literature has reported in terms of protective mechanisms. Again I refer here to the literature reviewed in Chapters Two and Three. Lastly, I discuss the operational frustrations that the EALCs experienced when they implemented the Rm2R intervention by comparing similar frustrations experienced in reports of other interventions.

6.2.1 Value for learners: Similar findings

6.2.1.1 Stories promote life skills

The EALCs observed that the Rm2R stories **encouraged problem-solving skills** among learners. This process occurred through learners relating to how the characters in the stories solved problems, learners learning problem-solving skills from the characters in the stories and learners learning alternative ways of thinking about difficulties that supported their attempts to deal with problems. International authors all indicate the acquisition of problem-solving skills as part of the **protective system of cognitive competence** is linked to the outcomes of

resilience (Cicchetti, 2010:147; Masten, Burt & Coatsworth, 2006:696; Masten et al., 2011:111). South African authors also indicate problem solving as important in constructive coping (Cronje, 2008:105; Dass-Brailsford, 2005:575; Govender & Killian, 2001:6; Johnson & Lazarus, 2008:26; MacDonald et al., 1996:236; Theron et al., 2012:15).

The EALCs' perception that the Rm2R intervention encouraged the learning of life lessons and the development of related positive personal qualities (e.g. self-confidence, perseverance and optimism) could be associated with what the literature calls the **agency and mastery motivation system**. Being self-confident and able to persevere are similar to the **agency and mastery motivation system** recognised by the international literature as resilience enhancing (Cicchetti, 2010:147; Masten et al., 2011:111; Masten & Wright, 2010:224). South African authors particularly focus on black youths' agency and mastery motivation in achieving goals in spite of the adverse circumstances many of them face (Dass-Brailsford, 2005:580; Phasha, 2010:1246; Smith & Drower, 2008:155; Theron, 2007:368; 2013; Theron & Engelbrecht, 2012:266; Theron & Malindi, 2010:725).

In my study the EALCs also experienced learners being hopeful that their own lives would improve when they listened to the stories and anticipated positive outcomes. Being hopeful for the future is reported in the international literature as part of the **meaning making protective system,** although the way in which people make sense of their lives varies (Masten & Wright, 2010:227; Walsh, 2002:130). Several South African studies recognise meaning making as resilience promoting in adverse circumstances (Barbarin et al., 2000:24; Denis, 2007:37; Dass-Brailsford, 2005:579; Edwards et al., 2005:143; Germann, 2005:39; Kruger & Prinsloo, 2008:241; Malindi & Machenjedze, 2012:72; Pienaar et al., 2006:391; Smukler, 1990:7; Theron et al., 2012:15; Theron, 2013). Malindi and Machenjedze (2012:2) provide an example of street youth having hope for the future because of educators supporting them to attend school.

The EALCs' observation that the Rm2R intervention provides an **opportunity for learners to act as leaders** could be a reflection of the positive influences that the intervention had on learners. This involved some learners describing the

characters in the stories in a positive way to other learners in the group. It also involved some learners referring to a possible courageous response to vicious characters in the stories like the cannibal. Some participants reported that learners discussed being future leaders in the lives of others, but also in their own lives, and being able to solve problems. Being a leader in their own and others' lives gave hope and agency to learners to see the future positively and is therefore part of the **meaning making protective system.** An international author, Kagan (2009:257), believes that counsellors can act as "heroes" in learners' lives by reviving hope in adverse circumstance, which might in turn encourage learners to act as heroes in their own lives. Through the EALCs providing learners with meaningful stories, the latter were supported in being heroes in their own lives and nurturing positive beliefs about themselves. In the literature positive beliefs have been reported to help learners to develop a sense of purpose about the future that could in turn reinforce a positive sense of their own identities that allows them to accomplish their goals (Meichenbaum, 2009:186).

6.2.1.2 Stories provide distraction

The EALCs experienced the Rm2R intervention as giving learners positive respite or providing diversion from stressful circumstances. Culturally relevant stories are reported in the international literature as alleviating distress in adverse contexts (e.g. parental loss). One of the reasons why stories alleviate distress is because they distract individuals from emotional pain and decrease their anxiety (Heath et al., 2005:564; Rosen, 2003:46; Townsend, 2009:27). South African authors such as Maree and Du Toit (2011:31) and Wood et al. (2012b:225) also recognise the value of bibliotherapy in helping vulnerable children to cope with the symptoms of trauma, grief and depression. They do not, however, explicitly refer to the ability of stories to distract learners from difficult or painful realities, but it is possible that this might be part of what makes bibliotherapy powerful.

6.2.1.3 Stories promote attachment

The EALCs' perception of the Rm2R intervention was that it **promoted positive friendships** among the learners, who engaged more positively with their friends

after the story-telling process. **Attachment relationships with peers** are recognised in the international literature as a protective system (Laser, 2008:330; Luthar & Zelazo, 2003:533; Masten & Wright, 2010:223; Ungar et al., 2007:290; Werner & Smith, 1982:97). Numerous South African studies also see peer attachment as a resilience-promoting resource for learners (Barbarin et al., 2000:16; Dass-Brailsford, 2005:582; Germann, 2005:39; Johnson & Lazarus, 2008:19; Kruger & Prinsloo, 2008:241; Pillay & Nesengani, 2006:131; Smith & Drower, 2008:154; Te Vaarwerk, 2009:10; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005:1).

The EALCs experienced the Rm2R intervention as **promoting positive educator–learner interactions** that included the establishment of a trusting bond between educators and learners. Although this sub-theme is also part of the **attachment relationship protective system,** the positive relationship between educators and learners is reported by international authors as one of the most important attachments that support access to resilience-promoting resources and positive, life-changing experiences (Bernard & Este, 2005:451; Bondy et al., 2007:326; Harvey, 2007:33; Laser, 2008:330; Lewis, 2000; Luthar & Zelazo, 2003:537; Rutter, 1983:24; 1984:57; Werner & Smith, 1982:97). Similarly, various South African studies emphasise learners' attachment to educators as a buffer against adversity (Barbarin et al., 2000:24; Dass-Brailsford, 2005:583; Ebersöhn, 2007:1; 2008:11; Johnson & Lazarus, 2008:19; Lau & Van Niekerk, 2011:1168; Malindi & Machenjedze, 2012:71; Mampane & Bouwer, 2011:114; Theron, 2007:368; Te Vaarwerk, 2009:100; Theron & Donald, 2012:6; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005:1).

6.2.1.4 Appreciation of resources within traditional Africentric culture

The EALCs' observation that the Rm2R intervention stimulates **an appreciation of resources within traditional Africentric culture** could be a reflection of the value of the intervention. An appreciation of the resources available within traditional Africentric culture is also acknowledged by international authors who report the resilience-buffering effect of belonging to a culture-sharing group of people and valuing this belonging. Seeing membership of a culturally homogeneous group as valuable implies an appreciation of the group's **cultural traditions and religious protective systems** (APA, 2008; Neblett et al.,

2010:105). In recent international publications authors such as McGee and Spencer (2012:175) and Swanson and Spencer (2012:293) recognise the importance of identifying with one's own cultural heritage as a buffer against adversity. More specifically, McGee and Spencer (2012:175) recognise the importance of black learners developing a black identity in which they take pride in order to excel in a society that do not always value marginalised learners. In South Africa black learners were marginalised in the apartheid era, and even though the post-1994 dispensation in theory accorded all South Africans the same rights, the reality is that many black South Africans continue to be socially and economically marginalised (Ramphele, 2012:3). One consequence of this is a generation of learners who might not value their cultural heritage sufficiently and who need every possible support to encourage them to feel proud of that heritage. South African resilience studies confirm the resilience-promoting value of individuals developing an awareness and appreciation of enabling cultural traditions and resources (Phasha, 2010:1249; Theron, 2013; Theron & Theron, 2010; Veeran & Morgan, 2009:59).

6.2.2 Value for EALCs: Similar findings

6.2.2.1 The Rm2R intervention cultivates a positive attitude as EALCs

The EALCs acknowledged that the Rm2R intervention had nurtured **a positive mind-set about being an EALC.** The EALCs were encouraged to adjust their maladaptive mind-set about being lay counsellors to a more adaptive and positive one. In essence, once they had used the Rm2R intervention, the participants reported that they regulated what they thought and felt about being EALCs. This enabled them to embrace their role as EALCs. **Self-regulation** is widely reported as a **protective system** in the international literature (Buckner & Waters, 2011:267; Cicchetti, 2010:147; Masten et al., 2011:111; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998:205; Masten & Wright, 2010:226). For example, Masten and Wright (2010:226) report the resilience-promoting benefits for children, adolescents and adults of being able to regulate emotions and behaviour. Theron's (2013) South African study with university-attending adults echoed the value of self-regulation in the resilience processes of adults.

The EALCs also experienced the Rm2R intervention as facilitating an **opportunity to develop professional self-confidence,** which could be associated with what is called the **agency and mastery motivation system** in the international literature as a pathway to resilience (Cicchetti, 2010:147; Masten et al., 2011:111; Masten & Wright, 2010:224). Many EALCs felt more confident in supporting learners because they could draw on the Rm2R intervention, which enabled them to feel that they could take action (i.e. agency) and experience a sense of success because of this action (i.e. mastery). International authors such as Masten et al. (2008:82) and McCann (2010:216) recognise how experiences and interventions that enable self-confidence are associated with agency and mastery mechanisms and enhanced resilience. Similarly, various South African authors emphasise the importance of developing counsellors with counselling confidence to enable agency and mastery in supporting learners (Bell, 2010:234; Davis, 2010:62; DeLorme, 2010:108; Du Preez & Roos, 2008:700; Kakacek, 2010:207; McCann, 2010:216; Nelson-Jones, 2005:19; Pask & Joy, 2009:99; Tadlock, 2009:25). Ferreira, Ebersöhn and Odendaal's (2010:101) study emphasized the resilience promoting value of a sense of competence in their study with educators.

6.2.2.2 Opportunity to develop counselling competence

The EALCs' perception that the Rm2R intervention facilitated an **opportunity to develop counselling skills** could be a reflection of the positive influence of the intervention for them. Using the intervention made the EALCs feel better equipped as counsellors. Pask and Joy (2009:99) give examples of the basic counselling skills that counsellors should acquire for counselling competence. As part of their experience of the Rm2R intervention, the EALCs reported understanding better how to apply the basic skills that they had learnt, because the stories provided a medium that allowed empathic connection to learners. Pask and Joy (2009:99) confirm that being able to apply basic skills empathically is key to being a competent counsellor.

As mentioned previously, international authors (Cicchetti, 2010:147; Masten et al., 2011:111; Masten & Wright, 2010:224) and national authors (Bell, 2010:234; Davis, 2010:62; DeLorme, 2010:108; Du Preez & Roos, 2008:700; Kakacek,

2010:207; McCann, 2010:216; Nelson-Jones, 2005:19; Pask & Joy, 2009:99; Tadlock, 2009:25) emphasise the resilience-promoting value of feeling competent and how this is integral to the agency and mastery motivation system associated with resilience.

The EALCs' experience that the Rm2R intervention scaffolded an **informed acceptance of their EALC role** could be indicative of the protective value of using this intervention. It seemed that in using the intervention the EALCs had an opportunity to find meaning and make sense of challenges facing them as counsellors, and to make sense of what they could and could not (yet) do to support learners. They gained a deeper understanding of the importance of their role as lay counsellors and were able to experience meaning in fulfilling this role. Furthermore, the EALCs felt that their work was worthwhile and this gave them a reason to continue to support learners. An international author, McCann (2010:216), emphasises the importance for counsellors of finding meaning in their work in order to play a protective role within a trusting relationship between learners and counsellors. South African research also confirms that counsellors who accept their particular role might be more reflective and overcome obstacles easier, thus contributing to resilient functioning (Du Preez & Roos, 2008:700; Tadlock, 2009:44). As noted in Chapter Two, the resilience literature is clear that when people find meaning in their challenges, lives and circumstances, they are more likely to function resiliently (Masten & Wright, 2010:227; Walsh, 2002:130).

6.2.2.3 Promotion of EALCs' cultural awareness

The EALCs' observation that the Rm2R intervention heightened their **awareness of the power of cultural resources** implies that the intervention held value for them. Some EALCs acknowledged knowing some of the stories and this strengthened their sense of awareness of the resources available in traditional African ways of being. The stories also prompted the EALCs' awareness of their own values, whatever they happened to be, but particularly those that they had been socialised to respect, and participants were reminded to find comfort in their religion and the religious values and practices they had learnt as children as part of their cultural upbringing. This is in line with earlier studies of resilience in both non-African and African contexts and could be connected to the protective

system of **cultural tradition and religion.** Non-African studies acknowledge that when individuals embrace their religious belief systems, meaning and values are encouraged that might promote resilience (Crawford et al., 2006:355; Masten et al., 2011:113). South African studies also recognise that traditional, religious and spiritual practices are fundamental to how people (children, youth and adults) adapt to challenging situations (Barbarin et al., 2000:24; Denis, 2007:37; Dass-Brailsford, 2005:579; Edwards et al., 2005:143; Germann, 2005:39; Kruger & Prinsloo, 2008:241; Pienaar et al., 2006:391; Smukler, 1990:7; Theron et al., 2012:15).

Those EALCs (particularly white EALCs) who had not grown up hearing the stories included in the Rm2R intervention became aware of the need to develop more extensive cultural knowledge that embraced the values, traditions and beliefs of cultural groups different from their own. The Rm2R intervention seemed to stimulate the EALCs' awareness of the importance of the **cultural protective system,** and this potentiated value for EALCs as lay professionals and individuals. International authors such as Swanson and Spencer (2012:293) foreground the importance for adults working with learners from other cultural backgrounds of learning more about multiple cultures and becoming culturally competent. Among others, Ungar (2011:4) suggests that adult support for children that takes place in culturally unaligned ways is limited in its efficacy.

6.2.3 Operational frustrations: Similar findings

When the EALCs implemented the Rm2R intervention, there were aspects of it that frustrated them. This led to their wanting to refine the intervention so that there would be fewer frustrations in successive implementations of the Rm2R intervention and so that the value of the intervention for both learners and EALCs would be enhanced.

6.2.3.1 Stories require refinement

The EALCs' perception that the stories needed refinement, particularly with regard to the limitations of not telling stories in learners' home language and how this impeded learner comprehension, suggested that in its current form the Rm2R intervention had limited value. Canada et al. (2007:12) recorded similar

limitations when they reported on school counsellors' concerns regarding a crisis intervention with learners from diverse backgrounds. The findings indicated school counsellors' realisation that interventions needed to be presented in learners' home language to ensure a better impact. If learners were provided with understandable concepts in their home language then they might be able to better comprehend interventions.

6.2.3.2 Change the presentation of the stories

The EALCs' observation that the stories needed to be presented differently highlights the limited value of stories that rely on oral presentation only.

Mitchell-Kamalie (2002:47) implemented a bibliotherapeutic intervention with primary school learners and investigated its influence on them. She found that the intervention did "contribute to quantifiable changes in personality development and interpersonal relations" (Mitchell-Kamalie, 2002:47). Despite this, Mitchell-Kamalie (2002:47) emphasises the importance of using complementary supportive materials such as audio-visual materials when implementing bibliotherapeutic interventions. She also emphasises the need to include follow-up discussions. The suggestions of the EALCs in my study about how to better present the stories align well with Mitchell-Kamalie's (2002:47) conclusions. Some EALCs dealt with their frustrations regarding mode of delivery by telling the stories in a captivating way that included, for example, changing their tone of voice for the different characters. In this sense, these EALCs handled their frustrations by intuitively doing what Heath et al. (2005:570) recommend with regard to effective bibliotherapy, realising that story telling "comes alive" through, for example, voice interpretations of characters, making eye contact with the audience, using different volume and rate of speech, and asking appropriate questions at the right moment (Heath et al. 2005:570).

6.2.3.3 Rm2R intervention alone is not enough

As also noted above (see section 6.2.3.1), the EALCs (mainly white EALCs or those who had not been reared in traditionally Africentric homes) experienced a need for the intervention to **include information on Africentric culture** and on symbols/characters typically included in traditional Africentric stories. Their

frustration flowed from their sometimes being unfamiliar and/or uncomfortable with the content of the stories, which were traditionally Africentric. Wood et al. (2012a:504) report on unforseen challenges and caveats relating to the Rm2R intervention. These included some white researchers and psychologists who reviewed the stories being concerned that some of the characters (e.g. cannibals) were "vicious" and that stories would therefore harm (rather than promote) learners' well-being. However, black researchers and psychologists argued that it was part of their culture to make children stronger through stories containing these characters. Upon review, the team recognised that traditional Western fairytales also contained similar symbols and acts of cruelty. This report by Wood et al. (2012a:504) echoes participants' frustrations: an intervention that is rooted in a given cultural heritage probably needs to offer meaningful explanations of that heritage in order to increase the value of the intervention for counsellors who are not members of that particular culture. Wood et al. (2012a:504) and my study both suggest the need to include information on Africentric culture as a way to improve understanding of the resilience-promoting potential of the symbols/characters in the stories and thereby amplify the value of the intervention for counsellors and others.

Furthermore, the EALCs were frustrated because although the Rm2R intervention encouraged them to feel more competent as counsellors, they remained aware that they **need to be able to meet diverse learners' needs.** The stories were helpful, but did not support the EALCs to meet the diverse needs of learners from varying races, ethnicities, social classes or developmental stages. Thus the intervention was incomplete in that it offered one set of stories rather than, for example, stories aimed specifically at learners from impoverished families socialised in Catholic world views and challenged by the loss of a mother, or stories aimed at boys from impoverished families socialised to respect ancestral practices and challenged by the loss of a mother. In a review by Theron (2012a:342) of the caveats and ethical complexities involved in studying resilience and intervening to enhance resilience, she foregrounds "inadequate attention to cultural and contextual influences". Theron (2012a:342) recommends inviting an advisory panel to "sensitise researchers to cultural and contextual influences on risk and resilience". One possible way to support EALCs to

experience less frustration when implementing Rm2R is to encourage schools and EALCs to utilise advisory panels or groups of knowledgeable locals to support the use of the intervention with learners from diverse groups and with diverse needs. In some ways, this would begin to approach the action research related tasks of developing collaborative partnerships (Heath & Hudnall, 2011:115).

6.3 DIFFERENCES: FINDINGS THAT DO NOT ECHO THE LITERATURE

In the following section I review my findings in terms of how they differ from what is currently reported in the relevant literature. In other words, I compare my findings to what is already known to indicate how my study contributes new understanding to the potential value for EALCs of being provided with ready-made programmes.

6.3.1 Value for learners: Different findings

A brief discussion follows of how the EALCs' perceptions of the resilience-promoting value of the Rm2R intervention strategy for orphaned learners were different from the protective processes described in the resilience literature.

6.3.1.1 Stories promote life skills

Although the EALCs' experiences that the Rm2R intervention promoted life skills in orphaned learners are similar to Masten and Wright's (2010:223–28) protective systems, a slight difference was detected. When the EALCs reported that a benefit of the Rm2R stories lay in learners acquiring life skills, they were referring to learners' inclination to problem solve during/after the story-telling sessions, to value and develop positive qualities and be hopeful, and to learn to act as leaders. Masten and Wright (2010:223-28) refer to all of the aforementioned as facilitative of resilience, but they do not suggest that the formal and informal learning of life skills scaffolds these pathways to resilience. For example, in Masten and Wright's (2010:225) protective system of cognitive competence, the enablement of problem-solving skills takes place through the formal development of intellectual ability and executive functioning skills. Thus, the EALCs' experiences suggest that within commonly reported resilience-promoting systems, like schools, adults can draw on stories that teach life skills indirectly to

nurture resilience. The EALCs' experiences also suggest that life skills can be taught informally and should not just be left to Life Orientation educators during designated periods in the school day.

6.3.2 Value for EALCs: Different findings

The sub-section above is brief; the same applies to the section below: there were few differences between the value the EALCs associated with the Rm2R intervention and other pathways to resilience described in the literature.

6.3.2.1 Promotion of EALCs' cultural awareness

Although the EALCs' perception that the Rm2R intervention promoted their cultural awareness could be connected to the protective system of **cultural tradition and religion** (Masten & Wright, 2010:228), it is marginally different from how the literature explains the potential of cultural traditions and religion to promote resilience. The literature reported in Chapter Two explains that participation in traditional, religious and spiritual practices is fundamental to how people adapt to challenging situations (Barbarin et al., 2000:24; Denis, 2007:37; Dass-Brailsford, 2005:579; Edwards et al., 2005:143; Germann, 2005:39; Kruger & Prinsloo, 2008:241; Pienaar et al., 2006:391; Smukler, 1990:7; Theron et al., 2012:15). For example, in Dass-Brailsford's study (2005:579) the enablement of the protective system of cultural tradition is through exposure to cultural practices such as lighting a candle and communicating with the ancestors. These practices were familiar to the students in Dass-Brailsford's study and were reassuring and enabling. However, in my study some EALCs' participation in the Rm2R intervention made them aware that they needed to augment their cultural knowledge in order to provide effective resilience-promoting support for learners from other cultures. In other words, for these EALCs the pathway to their being more effective and more resilient counsellors did not lie in themselves participating in cultural traditions, but in telling stories that drew on a cultural heritage that they were unfamiliar with. It seems that their application of an intervention that was culturally rich for learners but not for the EALCs themselves prompted the latter wanting to expand their cultural knowledge. In other words, they were enabled by their experience of not knowing enough about traditional

African culture rather than by their own familiarity with traditional African practices, as in the studies referred to above.

6.3.3 Operational frustrations: Different findings

A brief discussion follows of how the EALCs' perceptions of the frustrations experienced during the Rm2R intervention were different from the frustrations/challenges experienced with another intervention.

6.3.3.1 Rm2R intervention alone is not enough

Mitchell-Kamalie (2002:47) suggests that to use bibliotherapy effectively with primary school learners, attention needs to be paid to the structural (syntax and grammar), lexical (vocabulary) and intellectual (level of difficulty of ideas) variables of the stories. Despite these indications of what is needed to make bibliotherapeutic interventions optimal, Mitchell-Kamalie (2002:47) does not mention that bibliotherapy interventions with South African children need to pay careful attention to the alignment of stories with the cultural backgrounds of educators (or EALCs) and learners. In my study the EALCs reported that ready-made interventions would be incomplete if they did not include detailed information on the indigenous cultural concepts used in the bibliotherapeutic stories. In the case of the Rm2R intervention, this specifically meant that people using it needed to understand the Africentric symbolism, concepts and contents that the stories contained, and black learners who were no longer members of traditional families also needed access to the meanings of such concepts. Although Mitchell-Kamalie (2002:47) recognises that a limitation of her study was the lack of "exploration of bibliotherapy as a therapeutic strategy with different populations", this recognition of incompleteness was different from that of the EALCs in my study, in terms of which exploring bibliotherapy with different groups of South Africans would not be sufficient in itself if it was not accompanied by a thorough explanation of any indigenous concepts used in the stories.

6.4   SILENCES IN MY STUDY

6.4.1 Value of Rm2R for learners and EALCs: Silences

To highlight how EALCs' experiences of the resilience-promoting value of the Rm2R intervention did not include resilience-supporting mechanisms/resources reported in the literature (as summarised in Chapter Two), I include a tabulation of the silences (see Table 6.1).

Table 6.1   Adaptive systems' silences

Adaptive systems reported in Chapter Two	Reported by EALCs as part of the resilience-supporting value of Rm2R for learners	Reported by EALCs as part of the resilience-supporting value of Rm2R for EALCs themselves
Attachment relationships		
Attachment to family	**No, silent**	**No, silent**
Attachment to educators	Reported	**No, silent**
Attachment to peers	Reported	**No, silent**
Community attachments	**No, silent**	**No, silent**
Cultural tradition and religion		
Religion	**No, silent**	Reported
Africentric practices	Reported	Reported
Agency and mastery motivation system	Reported	Reported
Cognitive competence	Reported	**No, silent**
Self-regulation	**No, silent** (although this might have been part of the benefit of learners acquiring life skills through the stories, because life skills have a regulatory function)	Reported
Meaning making	Reported	Reported

As can be deduced from Table 6.1, some of the resources traditionally reported as resilience promoting were not recorded by the EALCs in my study. This might be because the methodology and aim of my study limited the exploration of how the above adaptive systems had been encouraged. For example, participants did not interview learners or their parents/caregivers to determine their experiences of the intervention or what they thought the resilience-promoting benefits were. Mere observations of learners and informal or classroom-based interactions with them underpinned the opinions formed by the participants. However, the reason for these silences is beyond the scope of the present study. The silences do nevertheless potentially flag limitations of the Rm2R intervention in its current form. Nevertheless, to truly understand these silences, further research is needed (see section 7.7 for recommendations made in this regard).

6.4.2 Operational frustrations: Silences

In the section that follows I discuss silences in terms of the operational frustrations reported by the EALCs by comparing my findings to those from similar bibliotherapeutic interventions.

From my findings I could not report that the EALCs took the developmental stages of the learners into account in how they told the stories. It also did not seem that the EALCs considered how to adjust the language of the stories, given that all the participating learners were not English mother-tongue speakers. Some EALCs were only able to tell the stories in English, because they themselves were not fluent in Sesotho or any other indigenous languages. Thus the language the EALCs used while telling the stories was probably not on the developmental level of the learners speaking English as a second language. The result was that the EALCs experienced various frustrations with the presentation of the stories (e.g. the stories were too long or some words were difficult for the learners to comprehend). Mitchell-Kamalie (2002:91) takes into account the developmental stages of learners and how this might impact their understanding of the stories relative to their structural (syntax and grammar), lexical (vocabulary) and intellectual (level of difficulty of ideas) variabilities. Perhaps because she used developmental stages to gauge stories' suitability, she did not perceive problems with the abovementioned aspects. It is also possible that

EALCs were silent on this aspect because the Rm2R intervention was created for use with 9 to 14 year olds, and so they possibly accepted that the stories matched this developmental span.

Wood et al. (2012a:504) reported unforseen challenges and caveats while implementing the Rm2R intervention with orphans. One example of a challenge that was not found in my study was Wood et al.'s (2012a:504) report of difficulties with the attrition rate of participants. The challenge arose when the research team did not want to recruit orphans from schools out of fear of discriminating against them. For this reason they worked with orphans in after-care centres. However, the problem of non-attendance arose when the orphans only attended the centre for a few hours to be fed or came for such benefits sporadically. Because the orphans sometimes had to work (e.g. selling vegetables) to contribute to their households, they did not always turn up for the story-telling sessions. It is possible that the frustration of attrition was not reported in my study because the EALCs worked in their schools and used the intervention as part of their regular counselling activities. Because the intervention formed part of daily or weekly counselling activities at designated non-academic times in the school morning (according to the arrangements of the schools where the EALCs worked) or directly after school, the EACLs were not frustrated by learners' non-attendance.

The reason for the silences discussed above might be because the methodology and aim of my study influenced the silences reported by the EALCs. However, the abovementioned silences are positive because they suggest that contextual and methodological variables potentially add to the value of ready-made interventions. If, for example, ready-made interventions can be used at appropriate times and in appropriate ways as part of what learners do at school, counsellors and adults using the interventions might experience them as more valuable.

6.5   ANSWERING THE PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION

As a researcher I have attempted to describe and understand EALCs' experiences (good and bad) of the Rm2R intervention and its value for learners in order to make sense of their lived experiences of it. In the previous section I reported how these findings are similar to and different from what the literature says about how resilience can be supported and the benefits and limitations of interventions. Below I interpret the findings that emerged in response to sub-questions 1, 2 and 3 in order to answer my primary question "what is the value of providing EALCs with a ready-made intervention tool in the interest of supporting EALC resilience?" The answer to my question is: there is **limited value**. To explain how I arrived at this answer, I present two major themes, flowing from the findings reported for sub-questions 1–3, i.e. the worth of the Rm2R intervention (as an example of a ready-made intervention) and the caveats that apply to it.

6.5.1 The worth of the Rm2R intervention

Reportedly, the Rm2R intervention supported learners' resilience because it promoted life skills such as problem-solving skills, built confidence and perseverance, gave hope for the future, and provided an opportunity to act as leaders in their own lives. Findings also showed that the Rm2R intervention provided distraction for learners from worries and nurtured an attachment relationship between them and the EALCs, as well as between them and their peers. The EALCs lastly reported that learners showed an appreciation of the resources available within traditional Africentric culture by acknowledging stories previously heard. As shown above, this is seen in the wider literature as supportive of children's resilience (Masten & Wright, 2010:223–28).

In my study the value of this for EALCs lay in how it supported them to cope with the challenges of being EALCs in the context of supporting learners facing adverse contextual challenges. For example, EALCs face ongoing demands to partner with learners who are orphaned, affected by HIV/AIDS and struggling financially (Khanare, 2012:251; see section 3.3.1). Many EALCs do not know how to respond to these challenges (see section 5.2.3.3 and Drawing 5.16; Pillay, 2003:261; 2007:105). Because the Rm2R intervention encouraged learners to be proactive and more in control of their own lives by improving their

life skills, providing distraction from worries, and utilising resources provided by attachment relationships and traditional Africentric culture, the EALCs had a tool that helped them to respond to the learners' plight. Because this tool was ready-made, the EALCs were aided to respond without having to go to too much trouble.

The Rm2R intervention was also reported as supporting the EALCs' resilience, because it cultivated a more positive attitude among them by nurturing a positive mind-set about being EALCs and by providing them with an opportunity to develop professional self-confidence. The EALCs were also provided with an opportunity to develop counselling competence, including counselling skills and an informed acceptance of the EALC role. Furthermore, the EALCs' cultural competence was also developed by the Rm2R intervention by making them aware of the strengths in their own cultural heritage and encouraging them to learn about other cultures.

The value of the Rm2R intervention in terms of the abovementioned for the EALCs in my study is manifested in how it helped them to deal with school contextual challenges and the tasks laid down for lay counsellors (see Chapter Three). For example, EALCs are not adequately trained to deal with diversity (Dahir, 2009:3; see section 3.3.2.1), but are expected to execute counselling guidance tasks and implement community-based action research with diverse learners (Van Niekerk & Hay, 2009:150; see section 3.2). Many EALCs do not know how to react to these challenges (see section 5.2.3.3; Portman, 2009:21). Because the Rm2R intervention promoted a positive attitude towards their lay-counselling roles, counselling competence and the development of cultural awareness, the EALCs were able to adjust more positively to the challenges of lay counselling.

6.5.2 The caveats of the Rm2R intervention

The Rm2R intervention's value was limited in various ways. Although it had value for the EALCs because it supported them to respond to needy learners, nurtured a more positive attitude to their EALC role and multiculturalism, and created a safe space in which to practise the counselling skills that they had learnt more formally, the intervention was far from perfect. Essentially, the EALCs'

experiences highlighted four main concerns about the Rm2R intervention, which are discussed below.

6.5.2.1 The Rm2R intervention is not suitable for all learners

It was apparent from the findings relating to the frustrations experienced by the EALCs that the Rm2R intervention (a ready-made tool) was given to the EALCs without being necessarily suitable for the age or language of all the learners they worked with (see section 5.2.3.1; Canada et al., 2007:12; Mitchell-Kamalie, 2002:91). Although the stories were written in fairly simple English/isiXhosa/isiZulu, this was no guarantee that the language was simple enough or that it was not too simple for more advanced learners. This limits generic use of the intervention, even though it was planned for learners aged 9–14, not least because it is well known that South African youth typically have inadequate language mastery (Ramphele, 2012:38–39).

Furthermore, black learners were provided with a traditionally oriented tool without considering that they might have been raised in homes that were no longer traditionally African, which might have negative implications for their identifying with the stories or prevent their understanding of traditional Africentric symbols and concepts (see section 3.2.24; Ungar, 2011:10). Perhaps this was the reason why some participants mentioned the importance for everyone (i.e. parents, learners, educators and EALCs) to have a better understanding of Africentric symbols, concepts and content (see section 5.2.3.3; Theron et al., 2012:17). Thus, part of what limits the value of the Rm2R intervention (as an example of a ready-made intervention) is that it was designed to support black learners who had been placed at risk. This design assumed that all black learners in the 21st century would identify with traditional African story content, forgetting that many such learners are growing up without being taught to value their African roots (Ramphele, 2012:61–64). Again, this suggests that ready-made interventions cannot be used generically, even within the group the intervention was designed for.

6.5.2.2 Providing the Rm2R intervention without cross-cultural training

The Rm2R intervention was provided to the EALCs without providing them with cross-cultural training (see section 5.2.3.3, sub-theme 3.1; Holcomb-McCoy, 2005:414). For example, some participants were biased against concepts, characters and messages in the Rm2R stories (see section 5.2.2.3, sub-theme 3.2). Thus, given the reality of poor multicultural training for EALCs (Pillay, 2012:168), offering a tool that draws on a specific culture means that its value is limited. It is possible that EALCs from cultures that differ from the one being drawn on might be biased when using ready-made interventions that do not apply to their own culture. Equally, even if a ready-made intervention that is culturally aligned is used by EALCs from the same culture, it is possible that acculturation or the fact that culture is fluid (Ungar, 2011:3) might limit how useful the intervention will be. Thus, EALCs from any culture might not be able to use ready-made interventions as effectively without being provided with cross-cultural/cultural training that offers rich information on cultural concepts, symbols and messages as used in the intervention. It is significant that this was recommended by the EALCs in my study in order to counter biased responses (see section 5.2.3.3, sub-theme 3.1).

6.5.2.3 EALCs lack knowledge of counselling learners across a variety of contexts

Reportedly, the Rm2R intervention had limited worth when the EALCs lacked knowledge of counselling learners across diverse contexts (see section 5.2.3.3, sub-theme 3.2). For example, some participants felt they were not able to answer learners' questions because they could not relate to learners from different contexts and backgrounds (see section 5.2.3.3, sub-theme 3.2). Offering ready-made interventions when EALCs lack deep knowledge of how to counsel learners across a variety of contexts prevents such EALCs from fully supporting learners. This means that ready-made interventions are limited in this regard because the counselling needs of learners after/despite the implementation of such interventions cannot be fully met.

The caveat in the aforementioned for EALCs in my study lay in their need to gain experience in working with diverse learners and in their need to respond to

diverse needs. Wanting to engage with learners from other cultural backgrounds is reported by Swanson and Spencer (2012:293) as important for developing competence in counselling learners from diverse backgrounds. One solution offered by the EALCs in my study is for professionals who are competent in and knowledgeable about counselling learners in diverse contexts to facilitate practical exposure to counselling learners across a variety of contexts (see section 5.2.3.3, sub-theme 3.2; Theron, 2012a:342). This suggests that simply providing a ready-made intervention, even one that attempts to be culturally congruent (albeit for a specific group of learners), provides inadequate support to deal with the challenges facing EALCs. Moreover, the implication of this caveat is that providing a ready-made intervention is not a substitute for sound counselling skills that can be used to competently address the diverse needs of diverse learners.

6.5.2.4 EALCs might become dependent on ready-made interventions

Another possible caveat of ready-made interventions is that EALCs could become too dependent on ready-made interventions provided by research professionals or others. For example, the EALCs in my study felt more self-confident and comfortable in helping learners when they were given the Rm2R intervention as a ready-made tool to utilise with learners (see section 5.2.2.1, sub-theme 1.2). Although they commented on the inadequacies in the intervention and described what else they needed, the EALCs made little comment on how they could address their needs/frustrations themselves. This implies a dependent rather than an action-research or innovative stance. Fleisch (2013) reports similar tendencies in that once educators had used his language "catch-up" programme, it was replicated endlessly and they tended not to find independent solutions to challenges they experienced in the classroom. In other words, it is possible that what limits the worth of ready-made interventions is that they might immobilise EALCs and prevent them from further developing counselling abilities and solutions. EALCs can also then be prevented from taking responsibility for their own professional growth and may remain within the comfort zone formed by the ready-made interventions supplied to them. Because EALCs know their school context the best in terms of the history and culture of the school and community (Van Niekerk & Hay, 2009:423), ready-made

interventions might be limited when they are provided by researchers who are unfamiliar with EALCs' school contexts.

One way of counteracting the above caveats is for EALCs to explore for themselves possible interventions that might be applicable to their unique school contexts. These should preferably be tools that are proven to be best-practice interventions. This includes interventions that have been assessed and proved to be effective in supporting the resilience of EALCs and their learners (see section 3.4). It can further be reasoned that if these interventions were explored in the context of educators functioning as lay counsellors in their particular school contexts and in collaboration with school communities, then they might also prove to be valuable in promoting resilience among diverse learners and thus within EALCs themselves. Thus, ideally EALCs need to harness action-research strategies to cope better with the challenges they face as counsellors.

6.5.3 Summary of findings regarding the primary research question

From these two themes discussed above it becomes apparent that offering a ready-made intervention has value because it offers a tool that educators or school-based EALCs can use to support learners to develop positively. Ready-made interventions like the Rm2R intervention might support EALCs to encourage the development of adaptive systems among learners and within themselves in order to cope better with adverse circumstances and this in turn would support EALCs to cope better with their EALC role and duties. Also, in using a ready-made intervention, EALCs were supported towards more competent enactment of their EALC roles and this had resilience promoting value. This verifies claims that if ready-made interventions can be used to promote fundamental adaptive systems and provide access to resources, as reported by Masten and Wright (2010:223–28), then the particular intervention can be deemed to be valuable.

At the same time the value of ready-made interventions is limited when EALCs do not have sufficient knowledge of cultural traditions, symbols and concepts that are unique to a particular group of learners and that relate to the intervention. Ready-made interventions are thus limited if EALCs are not provided with cross-cultural training when receiving or exploring for themselves possible ready-made

interventions, or when they are not sensitised to thinking critically about the relevance of a ready-made intervention for the learners they work with. Theron (2013) warns school psychologists to be sceptical about resilience theories that do not consider the culture of learners for whom the theory is created, and EALCs need to learn the same lesson. Furthermore, when EALCs do not know how to counsel learners in diverse contexts with diverse needs, then ready-made interventions might not be as effective. EALCs who are not able to remove barriers to learners' future success because they are not able to counsel learners competently will experience difficulties when attempting to deal with the problems they face in the classroom (Galassi & Akos, 2007:25).

Lastly, the worth of ready-made interventions might also be limited if EALCs are not enabled to support their own resilience because they are stunted in their professional growth by being supplied with ready-made interventions by research professionals. Although I have advocated the importance of supplying EALCs with ready-made interventions to encourage their own resilience throughout this thesis, I recognise the limited value of such interventions if they do not encourage EALCs to explore for themselves possible ready-made interventions that are appropriate for their unique and particular school contexts, and/or to engage in action research related strategies to compile their own interventions.

6.6   CONCLUSION

In this chapter I discussed my findings in relation to the literature. I also answered my primary question by theorising on the limited value of providing EALCs with ready-made interventions as a tool to promote resilience within themselves and among their learners. To conclude, the findings show that participants endorsed the benefits of having access to assets in the form of a ready-made tool, while recognising its limited value. In future, the interventions EALCs choose to use does not necessarily have to be the Rm2R intervention, but could also include other ready-made interventions yet to be tested and/or compiled. Thus, EALCs should be encouraged to sample and critically evaluate multiple programmes, but also to hone their action-research skills in the absence of completely satisfactory ready-made interventions.

In Chapter Seven I give a detailed summary of my study and provide a personal reflection on my findings and research journey. I also provide recommendations for future studies and for the refinement of the Rm2R intervention. Lastly, I discuss the contributions and limitations of my study.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS
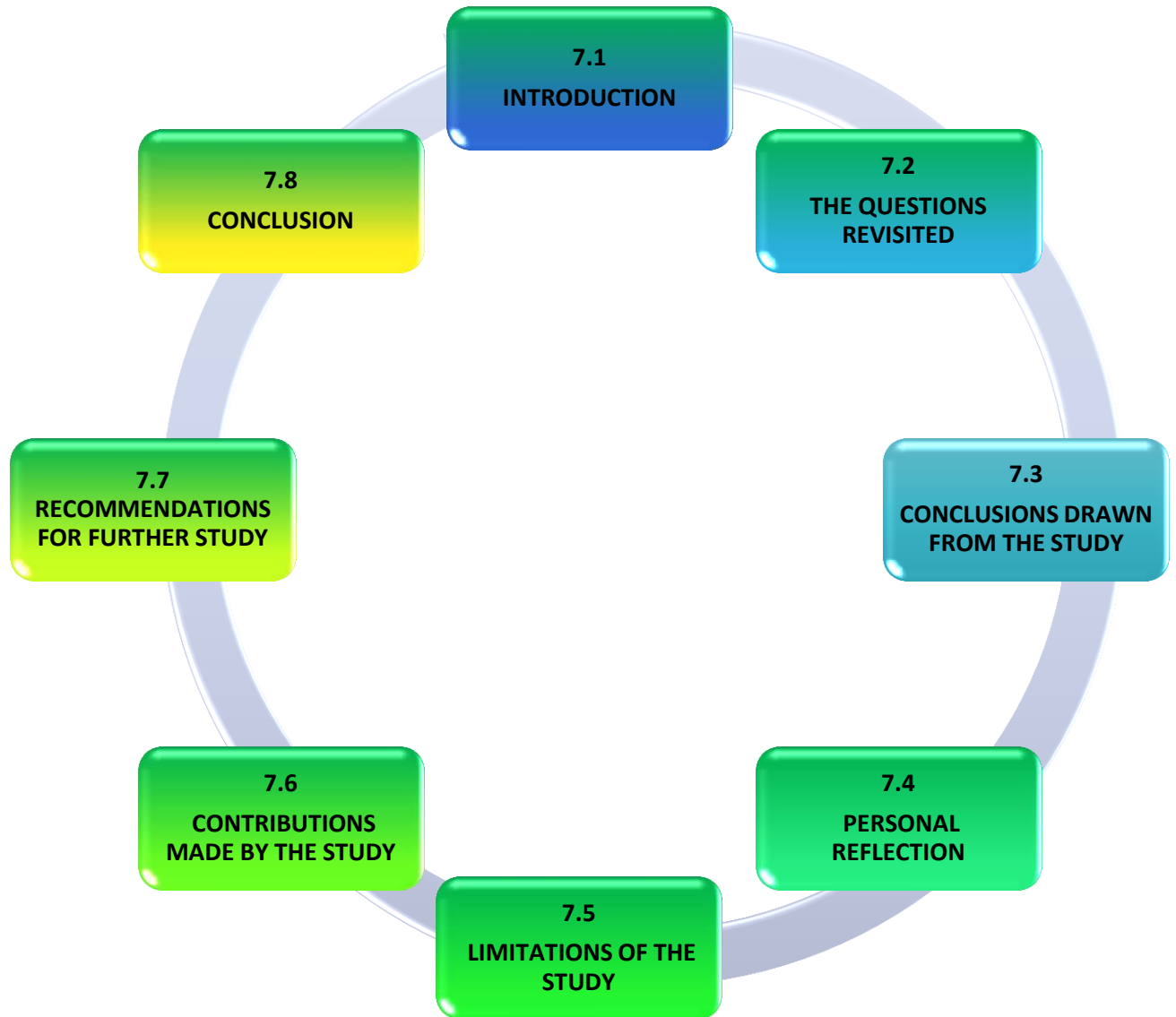
Figure 7.1 Overview of Chapter Seven

7.1   INTRODUCTION

The purpose of my research was to theorise about the value of providing EALCs with ready-made intervention tools, given the multiple stressors that they experience in counselling learners placed at risk by their environments. A secondary, but related purpose was to explore EALCs' experiences of the Rm2R intervention strategy (as an example of a ready-made intervention) as a pathway

to resilience for orphaned South African learners and for themselves. I carried out this study and compared the findings that emerged with the literature. I was able to answer my primary question.

This chapter is set out under the following headings: the questions revisited, conclusions drawn from the study, personal reflection, limitations of the study, recommendations for further research and conclusion.

7.2 THE QUESTIONS REVISITED

The primary question of my study was: What is the value of providing EALCs with a ready-made intervention tool in the interest of supporting EALC resilience? In order to determine if I was able to answer this primary question I re-examined my answers to my sub-questions (see Figure 7.2). If the sub-questions of my study were answered, then my primary purpose of theorising about the value of providing EALCs with a ready-made intervention tool would also have been achieved.

| Primary research question: What is the value of providing EALCs with a ready-made intervention tool in the interest of supporting EALC resilience? |
| Secondary research questions |

Sub-question 1:

What are EALCs' experiences of the Rm2R intervention strategy as a possible means of encouraging the resilience of orphaned black South African learners?

I conducted empirical research and then compared the findings to extant literature. I determined that the Rm2R intervention has value for the resilience of orphaned learners.

Sub-question 2:

What are EALCs' experiences of the Rm2R intervention strategy as a possible means of encouraging their own resilience?

I again conducted empirical research and compared the findings to extant literature. I determined that the Rm2R intervention has value for the resilience of EALCs.

Sub-question 3:

What refinements do EALCs recommend for the Rm2R intervention in order to address frustrations they experienced during its implementation?

I again conducted empirical research and compared the findings to extant literature. I determined that EALCs' recommendations for the refinement of the Rm2R intervention included the refinement of the stories, changing the presentation of the stories and a realisation that ready-made interventions are not enough.

Figure 7.2 Questions asked in my study

Figure 7.2 shows that the sub-questions of my study were answered. I used the answers to these sub-questions to answer my primary question. In so doing I determined that the answer to my primary question was that there is limited value to the Rm2R intervention. In answering my primary and secondary questions I fulfilled the aim of the study and contributed to both theory and practice (see section 7.6).

7.3 CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE STUDY

In summary, EALCs reported that using the Rm2R intervention promoted their positive adjustment to the challenges of lay counselling. This included the development of a positive attitude towards their lay counselling roles, counselling competence and cultural awareness. Four resilience-supporting pathways were reported for orphaned learners, including the promotion of life skills, positive distraction, constructive attachments and an appreciation of cultural resources.

See Chapter Five (section 5.2) for an extensive presentation of each theme and sub-theme. Table 7.1 provides a visual summary of how the adaptive systems found in my study reflected the adaptive systems discussed in the literature (Masten & Wright, 2010:223–28).

Table 7.1 Adaptive systems: summary of similar findings

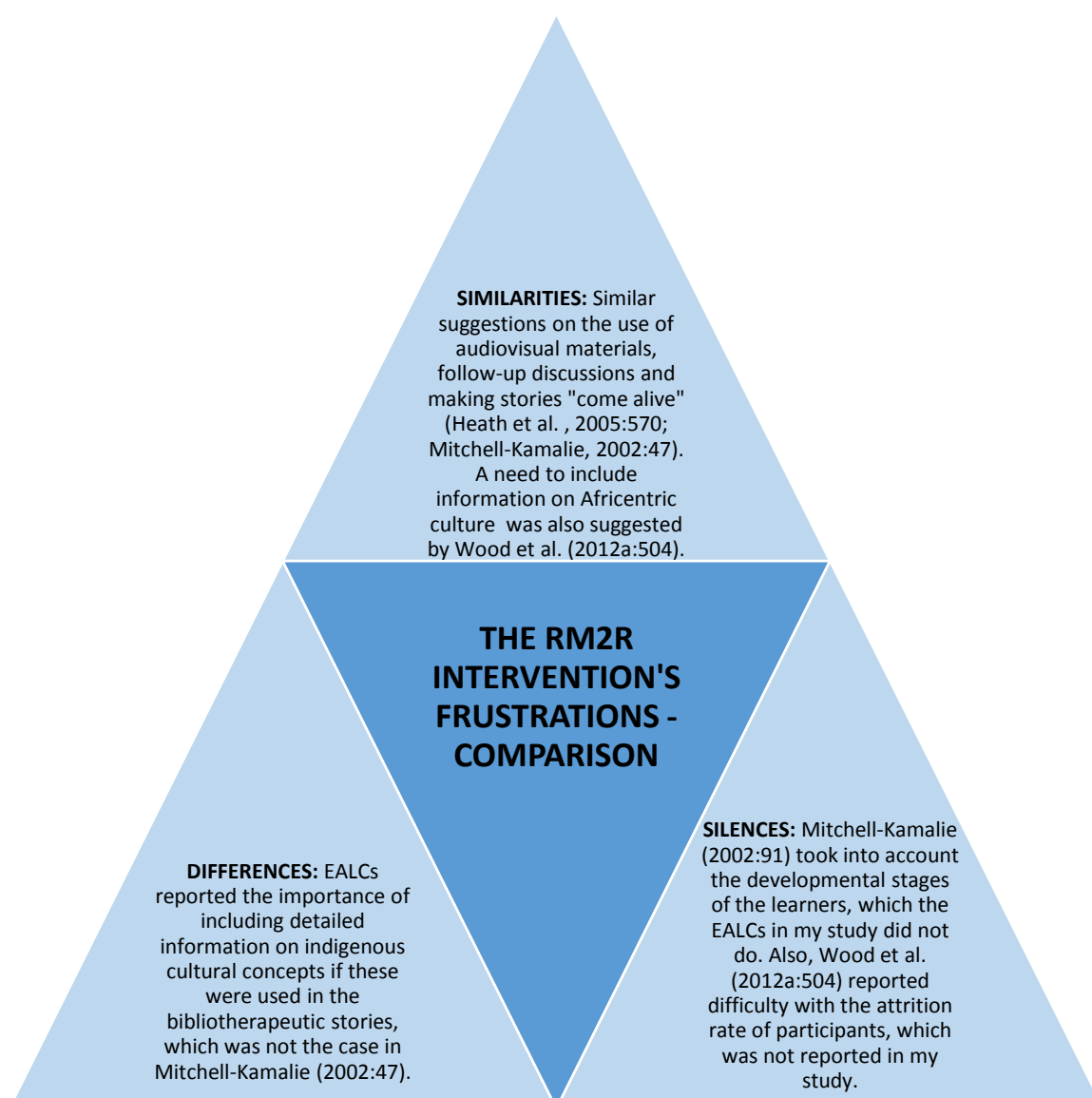| ADAPTIVE SYSTEMS	PUBLISHED LITERATURE (see Chapter Two for references)	FOUND IN MY STUDY (as reported by EALCs' experiences of the Rm2R intervention)
Attachment relationships	Positive bonds with family, educators, friends and supportive community members	**VALUE FOR LEARNERS:** The Rm2R intervention encouraged positive bonds between learners and friends, and learners and educators.
Cultural traditions & religion	Cultural traditions reinforce self-regulation and adaptive behaviour, and potentially contribute to the vitality and continuity of a community. Religion supports attachment to spiritual figures. Prayer supports the self-regulation of emotion. Religion also promotes hope, faith and values. Stories that are part of cultural traditions alleviate distress in adverse contexts. Cultural traditions reinforce a shared identity among a group of people to act as heroes in their personal hardships, improve individual attributes (i.e. improved self-concept, decreased anxiety, emotional regulation and interpersonal relationships).	**VALUE FOR LEARNERS:** Many learners were familiar with Africentric stories and others became acquainted with spiritual/traditional figures in the stories. Learners' identification with traditional Africentric culture bonded them to a collective cultural identity (albeit traditional), making them aware of enabling cultural traditions and resources. However, some learners were estranged from their cultural heritage. The Rm2R intervention's stories provided a means to introduce them to their cultural traditions. **VALUE FOR EALCS:** The Rm2R intervention promoted EALCs' willingness to be more culturally aware by creating an awareness of their cultural strengths and of their lack of knowledge of other cultures, and informing them of which values they can draw on to strengthen themselves and learners. EALCs also found strength in religion as part of their cultural heritage.
Agency and mastery motivation systems	Agency and mastery motivation systems are characterised by self-efficacy, self-determination and positive self-perceptions within the work environment (which encompasses the school context).	**VALUE FOR LEARNERS:** Life lessons enhanced learners' positive personal qualities such as self-confidence and perseverance. **VALUE FOR EALCS**: EALCs experienced more professional self-confidence in helping learners. EALCs were also given the opportunity to develop counselling competence.

Cognitive competence	Cognitive competence includes having the capability to think, consider and interpret in order to carry out tasks or achieve set goals that require problem-solving abilities.	**VALUE FOR LEARNERS:** Listening to and internalising the lessons of the stories encouraged problem-solving skills.
Self-regulation	Self-regulation consists of a broad array of skills such as reflection, planning, the ability to delay gratification, a working memory, self-control, selective attention and being able to change a response that is dominant or dysfunctional to an adaptive response.	**VALUE FOR EALCS:** The Rm2R intervention enhanced a positive mind-set about being an EALC and a willingness to learn about other cultures. Thus the Rm2R intervention helped change EALCs' more typically negative responses to more adaptive ones.
Meaning making	They way in which individuals make sense of their lives varies, but this could include positive belief systems that help create hope for the future and a positive outlook on life.	**VALUE FOR LEARNERS:** Life lessons enhance learners' positive personal qualities such as being hopeful about their own future by being leaders in their own lives and those of others.
		VALUE FOR EALCS: An informed acceptance of the EALC role gives EALCs a reason to support learners in the future.

In summary, Table 7.1 provides evidence of the value that a ready-made intervention, like the Rm2R intervention, has for EALCs and for the learners they work with.

In Chapter Six I also discussed differences between my findings and those that the literature reports (see section 6.3). In summary, the main difference of the Rm2R intervention in comparison to the general adaptive systems reported in the literature (Masten & Wright, 2010:223–28) lay in how the pathways to resilience were scaffolded: EALCs were able to facilitate resilience within learners and thus themselves through informal experiences (e.g. story-telling) rather than through other pathways to resilience (e.g. formal education, professional interventions). In Chapter Six I reported the silences emerging in my findings: see Table 6.1 for a summary of the main adaptive systems not found as resilience-promoting resources for EALCs and their learners' resilience in my study. However, it is important to note that these silences could have arisen from the methodological approach that I used in my study, and the quasi rigidity of a ready-made intervention.

Although the Rm2R intervention was found to be valuable as a ready-made intervention, participants suggested refinements to address frustrations experienced during implementation (see section 6.4). These included refining the

stories, changing the presentation of the stories and a realisation that ready-made interventions are not sufficient in themselves. Figure 7.3 illustrates the comparisons made with extant literature. In summary, Figure 7.3 offers proof that a ready-made intervention has various limitations and that EALCs need to be sensitively trained to recognize the limitations of using ready-made interventions, particularly if ready-made interventions are to support EALC and vulnerable learners' (like orphans) resilience. To support EALCs to find ways to intervene meaningfully in the lives of vulnerable learners and school communities, they need to be supported to develop a repertoire of counselling skills, along with cultural sensitivity.

SIMILARITIES: Similar suggestions on the use of audiovisual materials, follow-up discussions and making stories "come alive" (Heath et al. , 2005:570; Mitchell-Kamalie, 2002:47). A need to include information on Africentric culture was also suggested by Wood et al. (2012a:504).

THE RM2R INTERVENTION'S FRUSTRATIONS - COMPARISON

DIFFERENCES: EALCs reported the importance of including detailed information on indigenous cultural concepts if these were used in the bibliotherapeutic stories, which was not the case in Mitchell-Kamalie (2002:47).

SILENCES: Mitchell-Kamalie (2002:91) took into account the developmental stages of the learners, which the EALCs in my study did not do. Also, Wood et al. (2012a:504) reported difficulty with the attrition rate of participants, which was not reported in my study.

Figure 7.3 Comparison of frustrations

I was able to synthesise the findings and my discussion relating to sub-questions 1–3 to offer an answer to my primary research question concerning the value of ready-made interventions as a tool for EALCs' resilience. Figure 7.4 offers an illustration of my answer to the primary question.
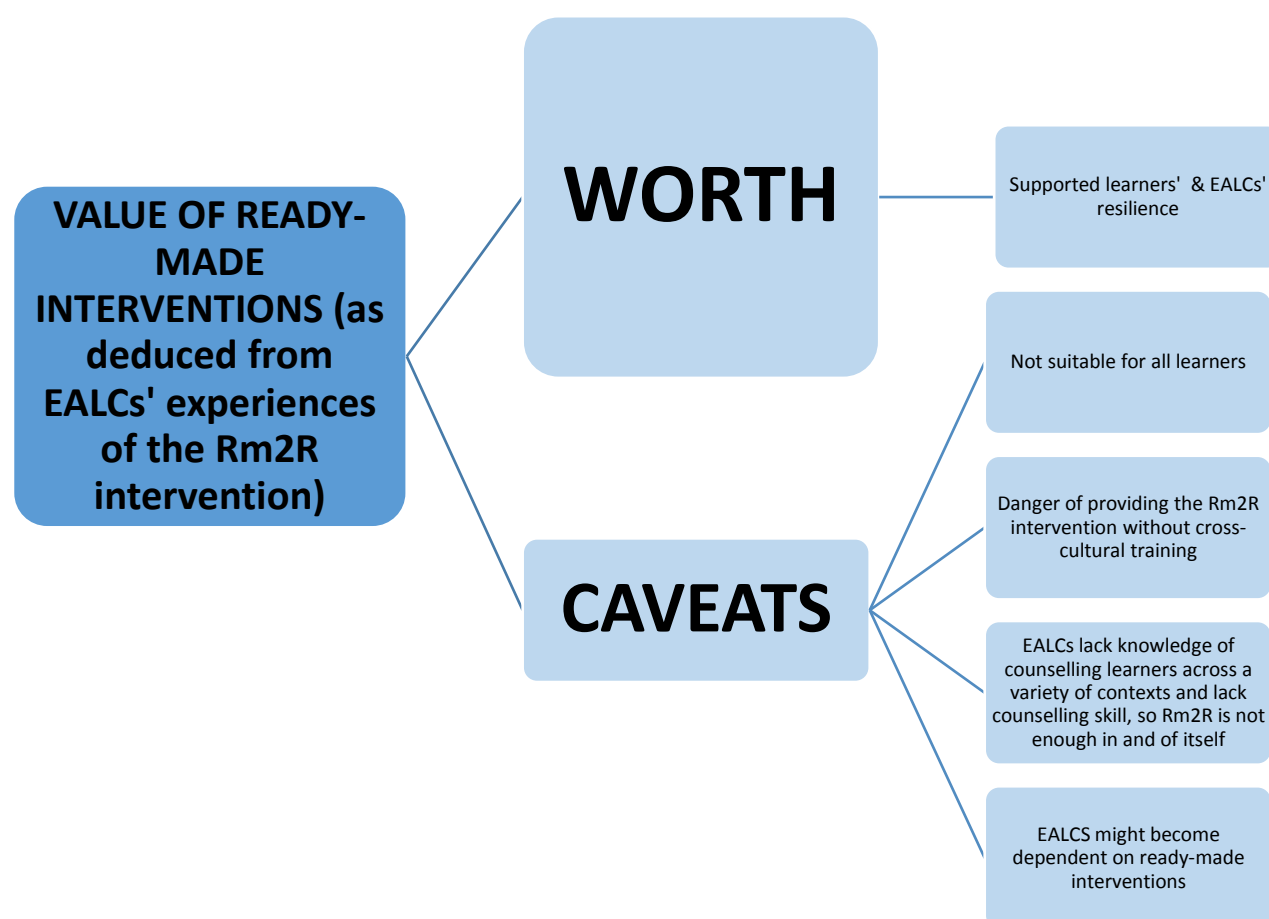
Figure 7.4 Answer to my primary question: providing ready-made interventions has limited value

In summary, I found that the Rm2R intervention as an example of a ready-made intervention is valuable when it is able to elicit adaptive systems recognised by the general literature (Masten & Wright, 2010:223–28). However, ready-made interventions are limited if users (like EALCs) are not provided with cross-cultural training on how to support learners from diverse contexts if needed, and if they become substitutes for counselling competence. Ready-made interventions are also limited if they become a crutch that restricts EALCs' professional growth, and willingness to be collaborative action researchers that engage with school

communities and published evaluations of interventions to find solutions that fit their specific context.

7.4   PERSONAL REFLECTION

I will reflect on my own findings and my thoughts regarding them. In this sense, I offer meta-reflections (Du Preez & Roos, 2008:700). I will structure my meta-reflections as follow: findings that I expected, findings that I did not expect and findings that disappointed me.

7.4.1 Findings that I expected

- I expected that the stories might facilitate life skills. From my background as a Life Orientation educator, counsellor and currently a lecturer teaching life skills, I was able to recognise the possible life-skills-promoting properties of the stories. For example, I could gather that elements such as bravery, problem-solving strategies and perseverance are reflected in the stories and that these might inspire learners toward similar acts/values. I believe that the teaching of life skills is important for every facet of a learner's development and I might therefore have noticed the possible life skills properties more than another person would. Another reason why I expected the stories of the Rm2R intervention to promote life skills is because of my history as fieldworker conducting the stories myself with learners. I was thus able to anticipate this finding from personal experience.

- I anticipated that the Rm2R intervention might facilitate EALCs' counselling competence. My personal experience as a professional counsellor in the school context gave me insight into educators' needs. One of those needs is counselling competence. As a fieldworker working in the Rm2R programme I personally experienced the stories as an accessible tool that made a real difference to learners and that consequently helped me feel more competent in supporting at-risk learners. At the same time I anticipated that although use of a ready-made intervention would make EALCs **feel** competent, this would probably not be enough to support EALC and learner resilience. In addition, EALCs need to develop counselling competence or a repertoire of skills that

will support them to support learners with diverse needs, and in the process experience a sense of competence and meaningfulness.

- I expected that some EALCs and learners might appreciate the stories as part of their cultural heritage. I was able to gather from the literature the importance of oral tradition in traditional Africentric culture. As a South African I have witnessed this tradition first hand. I was thus able to predict an appreciation of the resources available within traditional Africentric culture from the learners and EALCs, especially because the Rm2R intervention included traditional Africentric stories.

7.4.2 Findings that I did not expect

- I did not expect the extent of the uncertainty and negativity experienced by the EALCs before the Rm2R intervention regarding fulfilling their role as lay counsellors. I was shocked at the EALCs' helplessness, even though I had worked as a professional counsellor and had observed educators' struggles with supporting at-risk learners. In one sense it gave me hope that other educators who act as counsellors will in the future also be more outspoken about the challenges they face and seek help to improve their circumstances. At the same time it made me realise how important it is to make counselling training more accessible to educators.

- I was also surprised by the professional self-confidence the EALCs gained after the Rm2R intervention and the change in their mind-set from a negative to a positive one. I again did not expect there to be such a change in attitude. As mentioned in Chapter Six (see section 6.5.2.4), I was concerned that EALCs are too dependent on research professionals providing ready-made interventions. I do, however, recommend in section 7.8 that EALCs should be trained to identify and explore culturally appropriate interventions for their specific school context. It is to be hoped that EALCs will be more self-reliant without being over-dependent on research professionals.

- Some Afrikaans-speaking EALCs were uncomfortable telling Africentric stories because of their lack of familiarity with traditional African figures (like sangomas) or religious constraints. Even though these participants agreed to participate in the study and tell the stories, I did not think that they would be uncomfortable with traditional Africentric content or change their attitude about the stories. To my surprise, most of these EALCs told me after the Rm2R intervention that they recognised their ignorance of the Africentric content of the stories and wanted to learn more about Africentric culture. Again, I felt optimistic that the usefulness of Africentric stories is not just limited to EALCs familiar with Africentric traditions. Those that are not familiar with such traditions can be encouraged to learn more about Africentric culture and how to use the stories in a culturally appropriate manner if they are applicable to their school environment.

- I was also surprised by learners who were not familiar with their own traditional culture. I did not expect this to be the case. Because I grew up with a firm knowledge of my own traditional heritage, I assumed that the current generation of learners would also have been brought up with knowledge of their own traditions. I was also excited by the realisation that the Rm2R intervention could facilitate knowledge of traditional Africentric culture for African learners. The Rm2R intervention can also stimulate curiosity among learners who are not familiar with Africentric culture to become familiar with other cultures, encouraging celebration of cultural diversity.

7.4.3 Findings that disappointed me

- I was disappointed that the Rm2R intervention as a ready-made tool was not sufficient for EALCs to use as is. As mentioned before, the participants argued for training that would equip them to understand and support learners from diverse contexts and cultures. I recognise that I was unrealistic in this regard. After reading Ungar's (2011:9) emphasis on the cultural relativity of resilience promotion, I should have known that a generic ready-made tool cannot be regarded as being appropriate for every EALC in all circumstances.

- At the same time I was saddened. Although I had hoped giving EALCs' access to the Rm2R intervention would "solve" their challenges, and although in the process of my study I learnt how unrealistic this was, the EALCs' gratitude for this ready-made tool made me sad. It was a tool of limited value, and yet it meant much to all of them. This saddened me because it highlighted the flaws of a social system where educators, who are not adequately trained, must be pastoral carers.

7.5   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following limitations were identified in my study:

- My study's findings were rooted in subjective data (i.e., educator perceptions and opinons) generated by educators who were also lay counsellors (Creswell, 2009:92). Furthermore, the findings reflect my interpretation of their interpretations of the process of implementing the Rm2R intervention (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:13). For this reason my findings are limited, because they are co-constructed and because they offer tentative conclusions/theorising based on participants' experience of one ready-made intervention (i.e. the Rm2R intervention). This does not diminish the contribution that they make, but rather suggests the need for a cautious application of the findings and their interpretation as working hypotheses and not universal truths (Ellingson, 2011:605).

- I could not control how participants conducted the story-telling sessions and/or whether they adhered to the principles that they were asked to apply when telling the stories (see Addendum I). Although they were encouraged to tell the stories in the children's mother tongues, I had no control over the few who used English and reported that there were English words / concepts that some of the younger children struggled to follow. This might have limited the value of the intervention for participating learners and how EALCs made meaning of their access to and use of the intervention. It remains interesting that educators reported that the Rm2R intervention had value (albeit limited) even if younger learners struggled to understand.

- My study only includes Afrikaans-speaking and isiZulu-/Sesotho-speaking EALCs south of Gauteng. All three language groups are considered to represent collectivist-oriented people (Ramphele, 2012). It is possible that this orientation shaped their willingness to use stories in a group context and that more individualistic cultures might have experienced the intervention differently. Further studies need to be conducted to determine the value of ready-made interventions for EALCs from individualistic cultures.

- Possible language barrier, cultural differences and trust issues were reported in Chapter 1 (see section 1.8). Although I have described my experiences in terms of someone coming from a white, Afrikaans background and functioning as a counsellor in the school context (see section 4.3.5), my background might still have been a barrier with the isiZulu-/Sesotho speaking participants and might have limited their sharing of their experience of the intervention with me. I also might have intimidated participants because of my position of power at the university (i.e. as a lecturer, compared to their being students). However, I believe that the trusting bond that I built up with participants throughout the study allowed them to feel safe and to report their experiences authentically.

- I devote a large section of my Chapter Three (see section 3.2.2) to community-based action research. In this study I did not use this type of research. EALCs and community members should conduct future studies with the Rm2R intervention and apply community-based action research principles to refine it further. They should determine which recommendations mentioned in this study will be applicable to the refinement of the Rm2R intervention in their unique context. Further refinements can be established and implemented until the intervention is satisfactorily refined for the specific community's context. However, as Ungar (2011:6) reminds us, social and physical ecologies are not linear, stable or completely predictable. Thus, the cycle of refinement and renewing of culturally relevant interventions is never ending as long as the ecologies of communities do not stay the same.

- I did not evaluate the Rm2R intervention together with the school communities involved to establish if the broad social problems that they experienced had been satisfactorily impacted (see section 3.2.2.4) or ask the communities or EALCs what their original problems were. Given the prevalence of orphans, I assumed that EALCs would find the Rm2R intervention useful. I do, however, think it is important to explore in further studies the complex social problems facing each specific school community to determine what other interventions might also help with their specific needs, and how valuable these interventions might be.

- At no stage did I formally measure EALC resilience. By using their self-reported, qualitative experiences, I inferred that the intervention had supported their positive adjustment to the challenges of being an EALC. Although resilience studies often use self-report methods (see Theron & Theron, 2010) and although authoritative resilience researchers advocate the use of qualitative reports of resilience that foreground participants' voices (Liebenberg & Ungar, 2009), the absence of quantitative measurement could be interpreted as a limitation (Theron, 2012a). Furthermore, I did not follow these EALCs over time. Because resilience is dynamic, this is a limitation in my study.

7.6   CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY THE STUDY

My study makes the following contributions to theory:

- I was able to theorise on the value of providing ready-made interventions to EALCs in order to encourage their and learners' resilience. I found that ready-made interventions are not a panacea for all the challenges facing EALCs. This suggests that EALCs should be supported towards, and also take responsibility for, professional development and problem solving in their particular context, rather than rely on "asset-focused strategies" (Masten et al., 2009:128). At the same time, albeit limited, there was resilience-promoting value in the provision of a ready-made intervention and thus my study encourages researchers and academics to partner with local communities to

maximise access to "resources or social capital" (Masten et al., 2009:128) that will be meaningful to these communities.

- I confirmed the value of bibliotherapeutic interventions and contributed to a nascent understanding of the value of indigenous/African interventions, as opposed to Western-born interventions. EALCs were reminded of the importance of cultural heritage or were encouraged to be culturally curious. Pillay (2012:168) claims that counsellors need to be trained to be culturally competent. My study's findings promote the hypothesis of using indigenous stories to train EALCs to be more culturally competent.

- My study confirms that resilience processes require individual and ecosystemic inputs. The EALCs agreed to participate individually and the consequence was that they benefited from their participation. At the same time I (the researcher) partnered with them and offered them the intervention. Their adjustment to being counsellors was supported by my study, confirming Ungar's (2011:1) Social Ecology of Resilience Theory, but also flagging that researchers need to be mindful of their potential to animate positive growth.

My study also contributes methodologically:

- I contribute a qualitative resilience study with integrated data generation methods as used by 16 EALCs. These methods included traditional research practices (i.e focus group interviews and research diaries), but also more innovative ones (i.e. the visual participatory practice of participant-produced and -explained drawings). Far too few South African qualitative resilience studies have been reported to date, particularly incorporating the draw-and-write technique as part of the data generation process (Theron & Theron, 2010). Thus, my study is a methodological exemplar showing the possibilities of this visual participatory technique as a reliable method for rich data generation that provides visual evidence of pathways to resilience. The value of this exemplar is enhanced in that the draw-and-write technique is a simple method for participants to express emotion, perception and experiences and an inexpensive form of data generation that is applicable to Third World countries such as South Africa (Mitchell et al., 2011:36).

My study makes the following contributions to practice:

- My study contributes practically in offering access to an asset-focused strategy for EALCs to support vulnerable learners and themselves as counsellors. At the same time, in the course of the stories learners and EALCs became aware of adaptive systems (e.g. attachments) that they could draw on for support and so my study suggests that in the assets of stories there was some "process-focused" value toward "mobilizing the power of human adaptation systems" (Masten et al., 2009:128).

- Both learners and EALCs in my study offer some evidence-based indications of the value of the Rm2R intervention. Although this evidence is based on self-report, which has limitations (Theron, 2012a), my study makes a contribution to the practice of EALCs in that they could use the intervention more confidently based on these findings.

- The voices of my participants and my reflections provide some awareness of how the Rm2R intervention could be refined before being used again. This includes enabling better comprehension of the stories, shortening some stories, changing the presentation of the stories and including information on Africentric concepts. Because these will soon be added to the Rm2R website (http://readmetoresilience.co.za), EALCs, registered counsellors and other practitioners will be sensitised to the limitations of the intervention.

7.7   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Bearing in mind the limitations listed (see section 7.5), I recommend the following for further studies of resilience in the South African context:

- I recommend the repetition of the study with individualistic cultures to determine the value of ready-made interventions for a larger and different cohort of EALCs. This will enable a broadened understanding of more diverse participants' experiences of the Rm2R intervention and might contribute to more culturally- and context-specific refinements to the Rm2R intervention for each group of EALCs.

- I further recommend that a researcher with a similar cultural background to the isiZulu/Sesotho participants with whom the study was conducted should conduct another analysis of my data. More culturally sensitive findings could possibly be elicited regarding the protective systems reported in my study.

- Follow-up studies using different methods would be useful. This might include interviewing community members familiar with the learners or interacting with learners themselves using visual participatory methods/interviews to determine their understanding of the value of interventions in general and the Rm2R intervention in particular, or using more formal quantifiable methods to determine EALCs' resilience before and after the use of the intervention. These methods could help to investigate the silences noted in my study. The silences included parts of the protective systems reported in international research, but not in my study of the Rm2R intervention (see section 6.2.3).

- Although my study was conducted with EALCs conducting the Rm2R intervention with orphaned learners, I recognise the restriction of only including orphaned learners. This study should ideally be replicated with any learners who are seen to be at risk and should not be restricted only to orphaned learners. It would be useful to understand whether/how a different cohort of needy learners influence EALCs' perceptions of the value of interventions in general and the Rm2R intervention in particular.

- Another study could establish how the Rm2R intervention impacts the school communities that the EALCs in my study used the intervention with by exploring these communities' experiences of the intervention, and their recommendations for change.

- A future study using an action research approach to the use of the Rm2R intervention (or other ready-made interventions) could investigate how using such an approach could shape EALCs' and school communities' perceptions of the usefulness thereof.

- A final consideration is the need to establish a scope of practice for EALCs. Given the socioeconomic realities of South Africa, it is probable that educators will continue to function as EALCs. If their functioning was defined by a scope of practice, universities would be better equipped to train EALCs

effectively, and EALCs might feel more in control of their counsellor functioning. Thus, a study exploring such a scope is recommended.

7.8   CONCLUSION

The EALCs' use of the Rm2R intervention enabled me to have a better and deeper understanding of how resilience processes are both complex and culturally and contextually relative (Ungar, 2011), and can be shared by multiple stakeholders (in my study, the EALCs, the learners and the SANPAD-funded research initiative) (Masten & Wright, 2010). It taught me the value of researchers engaging with practitioners in ways that not only contribute to theory, but also make a real difference to participants' lives. My study also highlighted that researchers need to be very wary of the ways in which what they bring to participants might be limited (e.g. the Rm2R intervention was incomplete without complementary cultural training and could not substitute for counselling competence) and might encourage participant dependence (i.e. in its ready-made format the Rm2R intervention did not encourage participant agency or action research approaches, even though it supported EALCs' competence in other ways). Thus, researchers should be wary to not exaggerate the value of ready-made interventions as a way to find quick and easy solutions to the complexities of the obstacles that hinders EALCs' and South African orphans' resilience. At the same time, academics who train educators who will fulfil counselling roles (i.e. EALCs) need to be cognizant that there is value in making EALCs aware of culturally congruent ready-made interventions that might support EALCs' pastoral role, and be vigilant to train EALCs to harness appropriate ready-made interventions in culturally- and contextually-responsive ways.

As a researcher in the broad field of educational psychology my study helped me to understand the importance of training South African education students, particularly those who will counsel learners, to develop counselling skills and use culturally relevant skills and updated knowledge on evidence-based interventions that could fit the cultural contexts of learners in need. It also helped me to appreciate the value of traditional Africentric stories and how these should form

part of students' training. My study motivates me to do further research on how best to partner with EALCs to support both their resilience and that of their learners.

In conclusion, I would like to draw attention to a saying that I strongly believe in. It is from Steve Maraboli's book *Life, the Truth and Being Free* (2009). I add a photo of a tree showing growth despite harsh environmental conditions to illustrate Maraboli's point. Both of these remind me that hardships will always exist, including for EALCs, but the way in which we (and EALCs) choose to adjust to them can be shaped by the resources in our ecosystem and how we (and EALCs) use them. They will also remind me that as an academic who is instrumental in the training of EALCs, I have an explicit duty to partner with them to accept the truth of what Maraboli says, by honing their counselling skills, encouraging them to search for ready-made, relevant interventions, and nurturing an action research mindset (that includes honing and co-creating interventions).

"Life doesn't get easier or more forgiving, we get stronger and more resilient" (Maraboli, 2009).

Figure 7.5 Picture of tree showing growth in harsh conditions
(http://www.google.co.za/url?sa=i&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&docid=GYwMWAu5EC8PQM&tbnid=lX3zLDTxobryGM:&ved=0CAcQjB0wADgT&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.flickr.com%2Fphotos%2F36081663%40N00%2F3970466682%2F&ei=GwBbUfurF863hAf9roGIBw&psig=AFQjCNHwLRBuSoOdc_ivqX7uOV0gLB7iwg&ust=1365004699442411)

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[2] The reference list is aligned with the Harvard Style as prescribed by the North-West university.

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ADDENDUM A

PROMPT FOR PARTICIPANTS FOR WRITING RESEARCH DIARY NOTES

Research diary notes of _____ **Session _____**

- Please reflect on today's story-telling session:

    A   Comment on the children's behaviour while telling the story.

    B   Comment on your own feelings during the session.

    C   Comment on the children's comments on the story being told.

- Please reflect on the language of today's story:

    A   Comment on how the language influenced the children's understanding.

    B   Comment on how comfortable the children and you were with the contents of the story, which reflect black South African culture.

- Please reflect on yourself as a lay counsellor:

    A   How is Rm2R enabling you?

    B   How is it failing you?

    C   How would you change it?

ADDENDUM B

PROMPT FOR PARTICIPANTS WHEN DRAWING THE DRAWINGS

Draw a picture about your experience as a lay counsellor. Remember, how well you draw is not important.

Please explain your drawing of your experience as a lay counsellor. Write a paragraph about this experience.

LETTERS OF INFORMED CONSENT

LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT FOR LEARNERS

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
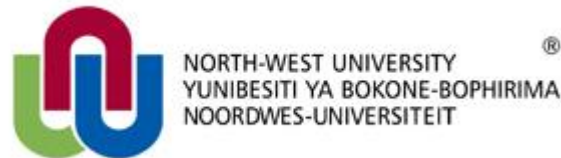
10 August 2011

Information about the *HOW SOUTH AFRICAN YOUTH NEGOTIATE RESILIENCE* study

You are invited to participate in a study looking at whether traditional African stories can help children to grow up well. I (Carmen Joubert) am inviting you to participate in this study. I am a PhD student and I am trying to understand whether reading traditional African stories with positive messages makes it easier for lay counsellors to help children to cope well with difficult lives.

To participate, you must be 9–14 years old and must be experiencing some sort of challenge (e.g. you might have a learning disability or you might be an orphan). In addition, your caregiver needs to agree that you may participate. The research will occur in cities and townships across South Africa.

Twice a week, for 11 weeks, the student-researcher will tell you and other children (you will be part of a group) a story. Each story will take about 15 minutes. You will be asked to make a drawing before the first story is told to you and again after all the stories have been told to you.

A student-researcher will arrange where and when she/he will read to you so that it suits you and the other children. She/he will not read to you during school time.

Possible risks and benefits: Because you will be read to in a group, confidentiality is not possible. Participation is completely voluntary and you can stop participating in the

287

study at any time, without consequences. You may ask any questions you have before, during and after the study.

Only members of the research team will know your full name. The research data and recordings will be kept for the foreseeable future (five years) in a secure location at North-West University. We will also ask you if you are interested in being contacted again in the future should the research continue.

The only time we will have to inform someone of your participation in the study and provide them with your full name is if you are at risk of being hurt by someone or hurting someone else. In that case, we will explain to you that we must get you help from someone like a social worker, psychologist or the police, but we will let you know we are doing this.

We intend to publish information from the study in books and journals, as well as share parts of the videotape we make with people in educational settings and at conferences around the world so that they can learn about youth like yourself and what helps young people to cope.

Questions/problems: If you have any questions or concerns before, during or after the study, please contact the research leader, using the contact information given below.

PhD student	Research leader
Ms Carmen Joubert,	Prof. Linda Theron,
School of Educational Sciences,	School of Educational Sciences,
Vaal Triangle Campus,	Vaal Triangle Campus, North-West University,
North-West University,	Hendrik van Eck Boulevard,
Hendrik van Eck Boulevard,	Vanderbijlpark 1911
Vanderbijlpark 1911	Telephone: 016 910 3076
Telephone: 016 910 3096	Email: Linda.Theron@nwu.ac.za
Email: Carmen.Joubert@nwu.ac.za	

VOLUNTARY informed consent form for learners

THE *READ-ME-TO-RESILIENCE* (Rm2R) STUDY:

If you agree, please place an "X" in the "yes" boxes to show that you understand and agree with each statement:

1. I understand the information about the study in the Information Letter. Any questions I had were answered.	**Yes, I understand** ☐
2. I understand that participation is completely voluntary and that I can stop participating in the study at any time.	**Yes, I understand** ☐
3. Because I will be read to in a group, my participation will not be confidential. However, I understand that my full name will not be used, nor will specific details of where I live be shared, when information from the interviews is used by researchers.	**Yes, I understand** ☐
4. I understand that even if my parent or guardian consents to my taking part in the study, it is my decision whether I want to participate. If I do not wish to participate or want to withdraw from the study at any time, my wishes will be respected without penalty. My parent's or guardian's consent does not make me have to participate.	**Yes, I understand** ☐
5. I understand that if something troubles me while participating, the researcher will provide me with information about community resources (e.g. a local psychologist) that might help me. I understand that she will do her best to facilitate support for me, should my participation in this study lead to my needing support.	**Yes, I understand** ☐
6. I understand that my drawings might be used in publications, presentations and the final report. If I become concerned with anything in my drawing, I may ask that my drawing should not be used.	**Yes, I understand** ☐

I agree to take part in this study.

_____   _____

   (Learner's signature)   *(Date)*

I agree to allow my child/ward to participate in this study.

_____   _____

   (Parent's or guardian's signature)   *(Date)*

The study has been explained to the young person and this form signed voluntarily.

_____   _____

   (Researcher's signature)   *(Date)*

LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT ®

Information about *HOW LAY COUNSELLORS EXPERIENCE THE Rm2R* study

You are invited to participate in a study exploring educators-as-lay-counsellors' experiences of the 'Read-Me-to-Resilience' (Rm2R) (Theron, 2008a:1) intervention strategy with African orphans to enhance their resilience. It will be expected of you to tell 22 stories to African orphans at your school and record your experiences of the Rm2R intervention by keeping a research diary and participating in focus group interviews. According to the Norms and Standards for Educators (DoE, 2000), the educator has to fulfil seven roles. One of these roles is that of pastoral carer. If you participate, you will have access to the Rm2R intervention which might help you to assist orphans in their own school context. To participate you must be enrolled for your Honours degree and enrolled for a course in lay counselling.

Prof. Linda Theron and Ms. Carmen Joubert will lead the project. Carmen will use the information from this study for her PhD.

What you will be asked to do: The study will involve four steps:

Step 1: You will be trained by me and my promoter in the telling of the Rm2R stories. This will occur at the university and will take approximately 60 minutes of your time. On this occasion I will ask you to make a drawing that will help you to reflect on your experience as lay counsellor.

Step 2: You will be required to implement Rm2R for 11 weeks at a school of your choice by telling two stories per week to your group of learners. You will interact with a group of 5–10 orphans for this period. You will be asked to keep

a research diary to reflect on your experiences of the Rm2R. The following instructions will guide this:

- Please reflect on today's story-telling session. Comment on the children's behaviour while telling the story, your own feelings during the session and the children's comments on the story being told.

- Please reflect on yourself as a lay counsellor. How is Rm2R enabling you? How is it failing you? How would you change it?

- Please reflect on the language of today's story. Comment on how the language influenced the children's understanding.

You will be asked to give me your diary after every four sessions. I will make copies of what you have written.

Step 3: When the 11 weeks have passed, I will meet with you and ask you to again make a drawing that will help you to reflect on your experiences as a lay counsellor.

Step 4: Two focus group interviews will be conducted with you regarding your experiences of the Rm2R intervention when the 22 sessions (i.e. 11 weeks) have been completed. Interviews will be tape recorded. The interviews will occur at the NWU at a time that suits you as a group. They will probably take about 60 minutes to complete.

Possible risks and benefits: You will be carefully monitored to ensure that no emotional harm is caused during the research. During the focus group interviews I will ensure that you do not disclose information in a way that could potentially harm you or others. In the focus group other participants will know your identity. Only I the researcher and the other participants will know your identity during the process, but your identities will not be disclosed in my study or any other research publications and/or conferences. You may also participate voluntarily and may withdraw from the research process at any time. You will not be penalised for not being willing to participate in this research.

Although you will not necessarily benefit directly, your participation will provide knowledge that will probably be valuable for the training of lay-counsellors and for future use of the Rm2R intervention.

Questions/problems: If you have any questions or concerns before, during or after the study, please contact us using the contact information below.

Student-researcher	Research leader
Ms Carmen Joubert,	Prof. Linda Theron,
School of Educational Sciences,	School of Educational Sciences,
Vaal Triangle Campus,	Vaal Triangle Campus, North-West University,
North-West University,	Hendrik van Eck Boulevard,
Hendrik van Eck Boulevard,	Vanderbijlpark 1911
Vanderbijlpark 1911	Telephone: 016 910 3076
Telephone: 016 910 3096	
Email: 12595888@nwu.ac.za	Email: Linda.Theron@nwu.ac.za

For concerns about how this study is being conducted, you may also contact the Research Director, Educational Sciences, NWU: Prof. Susan Coetzee van Rooy at 016 910 3422.

VOLUNTARY informed consent form for researcher participants

THE *READ-ME-TO-RESILIENCE* STUDY:

If you agree, please place an "X" in the "yes" boxes to show that you understand and agree with each statement:

1. I understand the information about the study in the Information Letter. Any questions I had were answered.	**Yes,** **I understand** ☐
2. I understand that participation is completely voluntary and that I can stop participating in the study at any time. If I am uncomfortable answering any question, I may choose not to answer.	**Yes,** **I understand** ☐
3. I understand that what I say may be quoted at length in publications, presentations and the final report and that what I draw can be used in the same way. If I become concerned with anything I said, I can ask for parts or all of what I said not to be quoted. I may also ask to have deleted any parts of the interview I want deleted. I can choose not to have my drawings made public.	**Yes,** **I understand** ☐
4. If I do not wish to participate or want to withdraw from the study at any time, my wishes will be respected without penalty.	**Yes,** **I understand** ☐
5. I understand that if something troubles me while participating, the researcher will provide me with information about community resources (e.g. a local psychologist) that might help me.	**Yes,** **I understand** ☐
6. I understand that other participants will know my identity and the opinions I give during the focus group interviews.	**Yes,** **I understand** ☐

I agree to take part in this study.

_____   _____

   (Research participant's signature)   *(Date)*

ADDENDUM D

AUDIT TRAIL OF OPEN CODING

An example of each data collection method's open coding.

Audit trail of how I open-coded experiences and recommendations for the Rm2R intervention (using Participant 1's drawings and explanations of drawings).
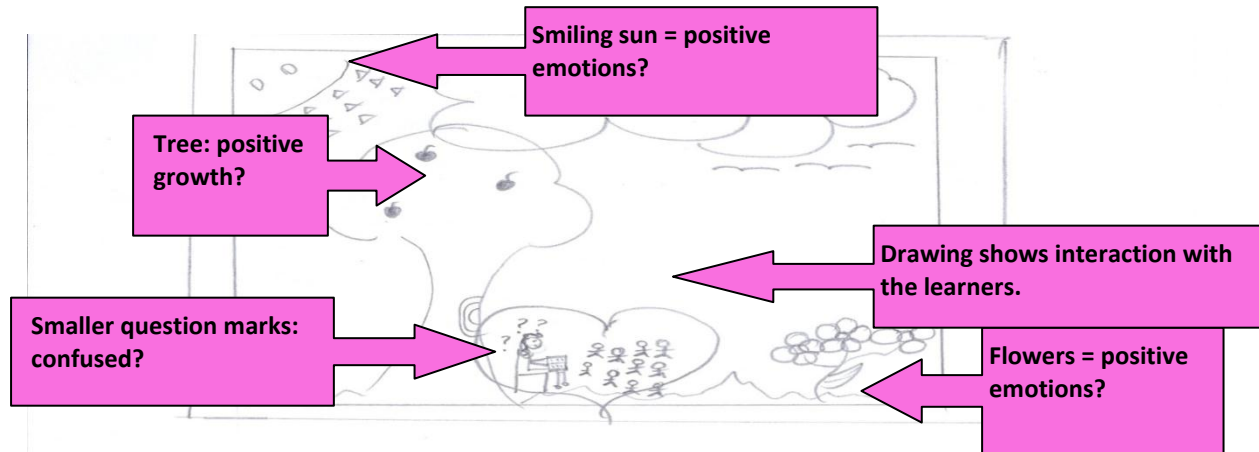
Pre-drawing of Participant 1:
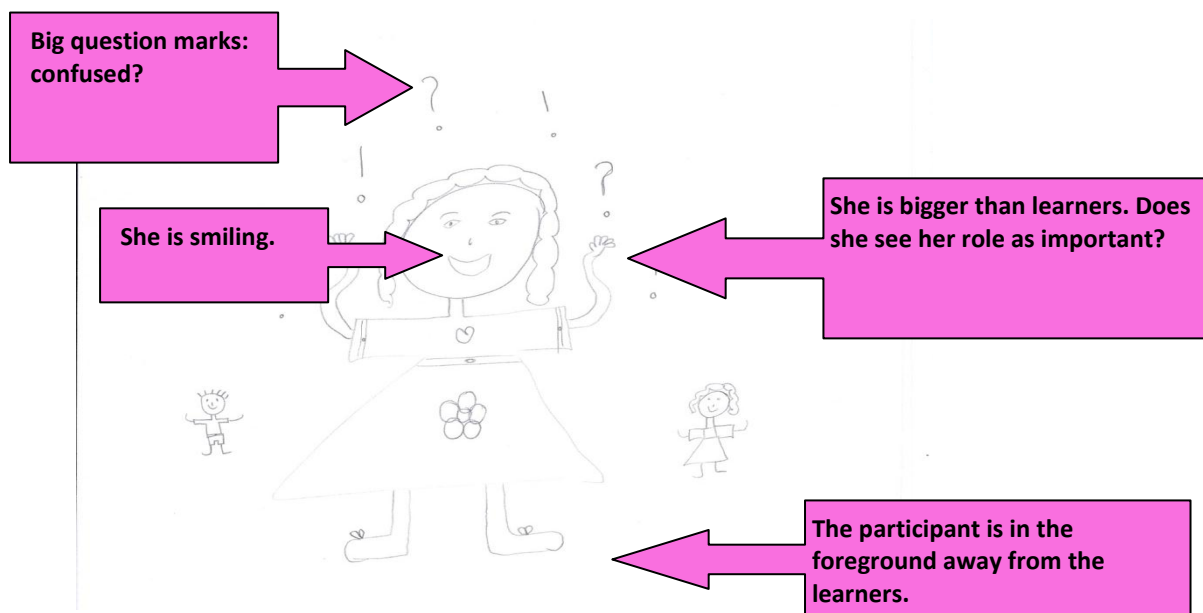
Big question marks: confused?

She is smiling.

She is bigger than learners. Does she see her role as important?

The participant is in the foreground away from the learners.

Explain your drawing of your experience as a lay counsellor. Write a paragraph about it.

I see myself as a woman standing in front of children with a question mark. The question is what solution will work for the learners' specific problem. *(She is wondering how to help the learners)* What must I do and do I do it in the right way? *(Uncertainty on how to help learners)* The specific learners expect a possible solution that they can use and that can possibly work. *(There are expectations from the learners that their problems will be solved)* I have the responsibility to help other people. *(The participant feels responsibility for helping other people)* At the moment I concentrate on all the small cases and refer possible big cases to our school psychologist. *(The participant helps "smaller" cases but has a referral network for more difficult ("big") cases)* I do not feel that I can have a good relationship with the learners because of my lack of having the means to do so. *(The participant feels that she is lacking a bond with the learners)*

Post-drawing of Participant 1:

Smiling sun = positive emotions?

Tree: positive growth?

Drawing shows interaction with the learners.

Smaller question marks: confused?

Flowers = positive emotions?

Explain your drawing of your experience as a lay counsellor. Write a paragraph about it.

The drawing explains the love between a teacher and her learners. *(Positive emotion; positive bond)* The learners are comfortable with her and respect her. *(Sense of professional competence)* The children are happy because the teacher is going to read to them *(Learners like being read to)* and it is fun for the learners. *(Learners enjoy stories)* But for the teacher, every day is a new challenge because she does not know what happens at home. *(The participant still experiences work as challenging)*

Audit trail of how I open-coded experiences and recommendations for the Rm2R intervention for Participant 6 in her research diary notes. The following example is a summary of Participant 6's notes for the first 21 sessions recorded for the third guiding question asked. The open codes of sub-questions 1 and 3 are recorded in this section:

C   **The children's comments on the story being told:**

1.   Most children liked the story. *(Participant reports that learners experiences stories positively)* One child said he did not like the story because it was too short. *(Limitation: not enough detail in the short stories)* The children liked the drum.

2.   The children first did not know what a cannibal is. After I explained it they started to ask questions. Many wanted to know if the monsters really exist. *(Limitation: understanding the cannibal character)* Some children even liked the cannibal. One wanted to be a cannibal. *(The participant reports that some children liked the cannibal)*

3.   The children clapped hands. They were happy that the monster died because he is bad for eating people. *(Participant reports that learners experienced stories positively)* They wanted to know how cannibals eat people and how do their children look like. The children were happy that the bees stung the cannibal. *(Participant experienced learners asking questions about the characters)*

4.   The children were so excited. *(Participant reports that learners experienced stories positively)* I could not hear all their answers. They did not like it that the cow had to die. They said that the cow was the boy's best friend. *(Participant experiences sympathy from the learners while telling the story. They did not like it that the cow had to die)* They liked the song a lot and the cow's name. *(Recommendation: learners like to sing along)* They

wanted to know how his legs could suddenly move. *(Participant experienced learners asking questions about the characters)*

5.   They did not like that the other animals laughed at the giraffe. *(Participant experiences sympathy from the learners while telling the story. They did not like it that the other animals laughed at the giraffe)* They wanted to know how his neck could be so short. *(Participant experienced learners asking questions about the characters, wanting to know why his neck is so short)* They did not like it that his neck had to stretch out. They said that he had a lot of pain and it was not nice. They were happy when his neck became longer. *(Participant experiences sympathy from the learners while telling the story. They did not like it that the giraffe's neck was stretched out)* One child said the story was boring because he did not like the two animals.

6.   The children said that the bees would have burned in the house. They liked it when the man built the house. *(Participant reports that learners experienced the stories positively)* They liked the song that was sung. *(Recommendation: learners like to sing along)* One child would have liked it if the bees were burned because she was stung by a bee and she does not like them. *(The Rm2R is a valuable tool to relate the story to the children's own situation. The child could relate to being stung by a bee)*

7.   The children said that he also needs friends even if he is a pig. *(The participant feels confident that the learners got a message out of the stories. The children recognised that the pig also needs friends)* They did not like the end because he did not have friends and it is not nice without friends. They laughed a lot when the pig's head was too large to go into the doorway. They felt sorry for him when he almost drowned. *(Participant experiences sympathy from the learners. They felt sorry for the character when he almost drowned)*

8.   They did not like it that the buck was bullied and that they [the other animals] laughed at him. They also did not like the jealousy. *(Participant experienced sympathy from the learners. They did not like it when the buck was bullied)* They liked the buck's song. *(Recommendation: learners like to sing along)* They were happy to know that the buck was pretty. *(Participant reports that learners experienced the stories positively. They were happy that the buck was pretty)*

9.   Everyone thought that the new woman was nasty. The children said it was sad when the mother died. *(Participant experienced sympathy from the learners. They thought it was sad that the mother died)* A girl wanted to know why they have to shave their hair if their mother died in their culture. *(Participant experienced learners asking*

questions about the characters. A learner did not know why she had to shave her hair if her mother died in her culture) Some of the children believe in ghosts and others do not. *(The participant experienced learners as impressionable. Some believed in ghosts and others did not)* Some children said that the buck could not give food because he does not have a stove in the bush. *(The Rm2R is a valuable tool to improve thinking skills. Learners could not understand how the buck could give (provide) food without a stove in the bush)*

10. A child does not like monkeys because they can hurt people. They wanted to know the monkey can steal the baby and how the monkey stole the baby. One child said that the monkey probably wanted a friend. Another one thought that the monkey wanted to eat the baby. They felt nauseous at the thought of the baby drinking from the monkey. *(Participant experienced learners asking questions about the characters. They wanted to know how the monkey could steal the baby and they had a discussion about it)*

11. The children were sad that the Kosi cheated. They were happy that Ngcede won. The children said that if they were the leader they would have built houses for the other birds and they would have cleaned the earth. *(Rm2R is a valuable tool to improve thinking skills. They had a discussion on how happy they were that Ngcede won and they talked about what they would have done if they were the leader, like build houses and clean the earth)* Most children did not like the story and did not understand it. *(The participant reports that the children did not understand the story)*

12. The children said that the snake was the children's friend. The children were scared when Sikhalomi said he wanted to go back for his feathers. The children were very relieved and happy when the cannibals drowned. The children said that the cannibals lied when they said they wanted to visit their friends. *(Participant feels confident that the learners got a message out of the stories. They talked about how the cannibals lied and how glad they were that the cannibals drowned)*

13. They were happy that the family got rich at the end. The children liked the story and they clapped [their] hands after I told the story. *(Participant reports that learners experienced the stories positively)* They thought it was very sad that the family was so poor. They said it was not nice to kill your own brother. The children were happy that there were no cannibals. *(Participant experienced sympathy from the learners. It was not nice to kill your brother and it was sad that the family was so poor)*

14. The children were happy that the first woman was chased away. They said that the woman would have keep on doing bad things. They thought the rats would eat the baby. They were not happy that the child was switched with the dog. *(Participant feels confident that the learners got a message out of the stories. They were happy that the first woman got chased away)*

15. Some of the children did not like the ending because the mother died. Others liked the end where Hethwa got married and was happy. Nobody liked it when Hethwa did not want to help his mother. *(Participant experiences sympathy from the learners. They did not like it when the mother died and nobody liked it when Hethwa did not want to help his mother)*

16. The children wanted to know why all the stories start bad[ly]. They wanted to know why the teacher did not ask why he is hungry. They were sad that his parents died. They were happy that the teacher collected money. They wanted to know why he did not give reasons why his homework was not done. *(Participant experiences learners asking questions about the characters/stories. They wanted to know why the stories start badly and why the teacher did not ask why he is hungry)*

17. Nobody was happy that the lion killed the other animals. They were happy that the lion died. *(Participant experiences sympathy from the learners. Nobody was happy that the lion killed the other animals)*

18. The children liked the end of the story. *(Participant reports that learners experienced stories positively)* They said it was sad that the mother died and that it was bad that the brothers fought. *(Participant experiences sympathy from the learners that the mother died)*

19. Everyone liked the wedding at the end. Nobody liked the bad witch. They did not like it that she changed Nezi into a snake. One boy said that he wanted to be [a] snake so that he could swim to Durban. *(Participant experiences sympathy from the learners. They did not like the bad witch)* They liked it that Nezi changed back to a boy.

20. The children liked that the lion was changed back to a bird because he has broken the promise. *(The participant feels confident that the learners got a message out of the story. They liked it that the lion was changed back to a bird because he had broken his promise)* They got [felt] sick thinking about the worms.

21. The children were very sad that the man and woman could not have children. The children were happy about the eight children. They were happy that the crows got the seeds. *(Participant experiences sympathy from the learners. They were sad that the man and woman could not have children)*

Audit trail of how I open-coded experiences and recommendations for the Rm2R intervention for Focus group inteview 1. The following is an example of the first two pages coded for sub-questions 1, 2 and 3:

R: I will start this conversation by asking one question. There is no wrong or right answer. Just say what you truly believe – don't try to impress me or think that you have to say this or that. There is no wrong or right answer, but it is about how you feel about the situation. You will not be penalised in any way for what you say.

What were your experiences while using this intervention? The intervention is the reading of the stories for the children.

P1: I was very excited. *(Positive emotion towards study by being excited to start reading stories)* They enjoyed the short stories. *(Participant reports that learners experienced stories positively by enjoying the stories)* I had to take out certain things because it was too long. *(Limitation: some stories are too long for learners)*

R: You say that you were excited.

About what were you excited?

P1: (Giggle) It is something new. You do not do this every day. *(The Rm2R is a new experience that she does not do every day)* I think you read the story, but not with the intention to see how the learners experience it. *(She has not read stories before with the intention of seeing the reaction of the learners to the stories)*

R: Is this another way of using stories?

P1: Yes.

R: How do you think the children experienced the stories that you read to them?

P9: I do not think they really understood the ending of the stories. (*The learners struggled to understand the ending of the stories*) They wanted to know more about the monkey's insights than the story. But the stories were nice. (*Positive emotion towards study by thinking the stories are nice*) The children enjoyed it. They were excited and enjoyed story time. They forgot about their troubles and could just be relaxed. They were very excited when I told them it was story time. (*Participant reports that learners experienced stories positively. They were excited and enjoyed story time*)

R: Can you tell me more about how they experienced story time?

P1: They listened attentively. They did not fidget and they did listen to the story. (*Participant reports that learners listened attentively*)

R: Let us hear from the others. What were your experiences?

P2: I was also excited about the stories. (*Positive emotion towards study by being excited about reading the stories*)The children could not wait to hear the stories. (*Participant reports that learners experienced stories positively. They could not wait to hear the story*) I am just wondering: some of the aspects of the story are not part of their culture anymore. It is unknown to the children. (*Participant experiences the stories not as part of certain learners' current knowledge system of black South African culture*)

And so it continued.

ADDENDUM E

INCLUSION CRITERIA FOR USING OPEN-CODED EXPERIENCES IN SUB-THEMES AND THEMES

Inclusion criteria for open-coded experiences (sub-question 1)

CATEGORY	THEME	INCLUSION CRITERIA		
		SUB-THEME	CODES RELATING TO …	EXAMPLE OF CODES
Value of the Rm2R stories for learners	Stories promote life skills	Encouragement of problem-solving skills	- Solving problems - Development of problem-solving skills - Imitating problem-solving skills - Description of possible solutions - Thinking in alternative ways - Thinking creatively	- T3, L8–10 - T4, L32–34 - T4, L158–159 - PostD, P8 - PostD, P8, N - T1, L129–132 - T1, L237–239
		Life lessons enhance positive qualities	- Employing the stories' life lessons - Positive attributes such as self-confidence, sympathy, perseverance and hope	- T1, L359–362 - T1, L363–365 - RN, P7, L139–140 - T1, L500–502 - RN, P15, L22–23

		Opportunity to act as leaders	• Leadership • Describing characters • Bravery • Future leadership role	• T1, L142–146 • RN, P8, L39–41 • RN, P7, L42–44 • RN, P16, L154–157
	Stories provide distraction		• Gaining respite • Excitement • Retelling the stories • Wanting to attend story-telling • Distraction • Recreational aspect • Positive emotions	• T1, L20–22 • T3, L82–83 • RN, P15, L132 • T4, L88–89 • T4, L90–91 • PostD, P6, N
	Stories promote attachment	Stories promote positive friendships	• Positive relationships with friends • Positive emotions towards friends • Value of friendships • Supportive friendships	• RN, P9, L67–68 • RN, P4, L88–89 • RN, P14, L46–47 • RN, P12, L332–334 • RN, P13, L39–40
		Stories promote positive educator–learner interaction	• Positive relationships between educator and learner • Positive symbols • Trusting attachment	• PreD, P1, N • PostD, P1, N • T3, L329–331 • T4, L65–66 • RN, P10, L120–122 • T3, L292–297

	Appreciation of resources within traditional Africentric culture		• Being familiar with some stories • Learning about Africentric culture • Awareness of cultural identity • Africentric characters • Estrangement from cultural heritage	• RN, P10, L54–55 • RN, P14, L80–81 • T3, L377–379 • T2, L76–78 • RN, P16, L195–196

Inclusion criteria for open-coded experiences (sub-question 2)

CATEGORY	THEME	INCLUSION CRITERIA		
		SUB-THEME	CODES RELATING TO …	EXAMPLE OF CODES
Value of the Rm2R intervention for EALC resileince	The Rm2R intervention cultivates positive attitude as EALC	Nurtures a positive mind-set about being an EALC	• Positive attitude • Positive symbols • Positive growth in mind-set	• PreD, P9, N • PreD, P10, N • PostD, P9, N • PostD, P10, N
		Opportunity to develop professional self-confidence	• Self-assurance as EALC • Being comfortable in helping • Having the courage to help • Less uncertainty • Growth in self-belief	• PreD, P6, N • PostD, P6, N • PostD, P16, N • PostD, P11, N • PostD, P5, N • T3, L335–338 • RN, P3, L118–120
	Opportunity to develop counselling competence	Opportunity to develop counselling skills	• Competence in using counselling skills • Exercising skills • Value of stories in utilising skills • Need for more intervention tools	• PreD, P3, N • PostD, P3, N • RN, P7, L150–152 • T4, L300–304 • T1, L593–595 • T3, L289–291 • PostD, P13, N

		Informed acceptance of EALC role	• Identifying with EALC • Accepting role as EALC • Finding meaning in role • Importance of being an EALC	• PreD, P2, N • PostD, P2, N • PostD, P12, N • RN, P11, L70–71 • T4, L289–291 • PostD, P15, N
	Promotion of EALCs' cultural awareness	Awareness of cultural strengths	• Awareness of cultural strengths • Familiarity with stories • Religious values as part of cultural roots	• T3, L480–487 • RN, P14, L82–88 • T4, L292–296 • PostD, P4, N • PostD, P14, N
		Encouragement to learn about other cultures	• Wanting to learn more about Africentric cultures	• T2, L153–163 • PostD, P7, N • PostD, P2, N • RN, P1, L272–274

Inclusion criteria for open-coded recommendations (sub-question 3)

CATEGORY	THEME	INCLUSION CRITERIA		
		SUB-THEME	CODES RELATING TO …	EXAMPLE OF CODES
Rm2R intervention needs refinement	Stories require refinement	Enable better comprehension of the stories	• Language comprehension • Suggestions regarding language usage • Difficulty in explaining concepts	• RN, P7, L58–59 • T2, L101–103 • RN, P5, L160–163
		Shorten some stories	• Stories being too long • Suggestions for shorter stories	• T2, L7–9 • RN, P15, L139–140
	Change the presentation of the stories		• Recommendations to change presentation • Inclusion of props • Follow-up activities • Telling stories in captivating manner	• T4, L270–274 • RN, P8, L132–134 • T3, L156–162 • RN, P12, L120–122 • T1, L207–208

Ready-made interventions are not enough	Include information on Africentric culture	• Knowledge/information on Africentric culture • Reasons why information should be included • Understanding Africentric culture	• T3, L243–245 • T4, L51–53 • RN, P11, L64–66 • T1, L590–592 • T2, L136–137 • RN, P7, L130–132
	The need to meet diverse learners' needs	• Need for more practical experience • Need to meet diverse learners' needs • Lack of training as an obstacle when dealing with diverse learners	• RN, P1, L153–155 • T2, L227–230 • RN, P5, L26–27 • T1, L663–665

ADDENDUM F

INSTITUTIONAL CLEARANCE

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Prof Linda Theron

31 March 2009

ETHICS APPROVAL OF PROJECT

The North West University Ethics Committee (NWU-EC) hereby approves your project as indicated below. This implies that the NWU-EC grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the project may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

	Project title:	Pathways to Resilience
Ethics number:	N W U - 0 0 0 9 0 - 0 9 - A 2	

Approval date: 12 March 2009   Expiry date: 11 March 2014

Special conditions of the approval (if any): None

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following:

- The project leader (principle investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the NWU-EC:
  - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project.
  - without any delay in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project.
- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the NWU-EC. Would there be deviated from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date, a new application must be made to the NWU-EC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility the NWU-EC retains the right to:
  - request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project;
  - withdraw or postpone approval if:
    - any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected;
    - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the NWU-EC or that information has been false or misrepresented;
    - the required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately;
    - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.

The Ethics Committee would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your project. Please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Committee for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely

Prof MMJ Lowes
(chair NWU Ethics Committee)

Prof M. Monteith
(Chairman: NWU Ethics Committee: Teaching and Learning)

ADDENDUM G

EDUCATIONAL CLEARANCE

education
Department: Education
GAUTENG PROVINCE

Queries: Nomvula Ubisi 011 355 0488

DATE:	**16 August 2011**
NAME OF RESEARCHER:	**Joubert, Carmen**
ADDRESS OF RESEARCHER:	**43 SIEGFRIED DE JONGH**
	Sasolburg
	1947
TELEPHONE NUMBER:	**016 910 3096/084 209 9212**
FAX NUMBER:	**016 910 3078**
RESEARCH TOPIC:	**An Exploration of Educators-as-lay-counsellors' Intervention Strategy: A Pathway to Resilience for Black South African Orphans and Their Educators**
NUMBER AND TYPE OF SCHOOLS:	**16 PRIMARY SCHOOLS**
DISTRICT/S/HO	**Johannesburg South**

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate

appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

Permission has been granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met, and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted:

1. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*

2. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.*

3. *A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*

4. *A letter / document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.*

5. *The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.*

6. *Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.*

7. *Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year.*

8. *Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.*

9. *It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.*

10. *The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.*

11. *The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.*

12. *On completion of the study the researcher must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and one Ring bound copy of the final, approved research report. The researcher would also provide the said manager with an electronic copy of the research abstract/summary and/or annotation.*

13. *The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.*

14. *Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.*

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards

Nomvula Ubisi

DEPUTY CHIEF EDUCATION SPECIALIST: RESEARCH

_____

The contents of this letter has been read and understood by the researcher.	
Signature of Researcher:	
Date:	

Office of the Chief Director: Information and Knowledge Management

Room 501, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2000   P.o.Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000

Tel: (011) 355-0809   Fax: (011) 355-0734

ADDENDUM H

RM2R STORIES

Number	Story name	Resilience-promoting themes
1	Avi and his drum	• Self as enabling • Community as enabling
2	Mankepe: A good singer	• Self as enabling • Friends as enabling • Cultural practice and beliefs as enabling
3	The cannibal	• Community as enabling
4	Ntulube	• Friends as enabling • Cultural practice and beliefs as enabling
5	A lesson learnt by a giraffe	• Community as enabling • Friends as enabling
6	Bhuzane the bee	• Friends as enabling • Cultural practice and beliefs as enabling
7	A pig without friends	• Friends as enabling
8	The proud buck	• Self as enabling • Cultural practice and beliefs as enabling
9	The boy and his goat	• Self as enabling • Family as enabling • Cultural practice and beliefs as enabling
10	Sinoxolo	• Self as enabling
11	The tale of Ngcebe: The spotted cloud warbler	• Self as enabling

12	Sikhalomi and the bird with the beautiful plumage	• Friends as enabling • Cultural practice and beliefs as enabling
13	Masilo and Masilonyane	• Self as enabling • Cultural practice and beliefs as enabling
14	The wicked chieftain	• Community as enabling
15	The story of Mphephethwa	• Cultural practice and beliefs as enabling
16	The good Samaritan	• Community as enabling • Family as enabling • Friends as enabling • Cultural practice and beliefs as enabling
17	The world's creatures	• Self as enabling
18	Unity is strength	• Community as enabling • Family as enabling • Cultural practice and beliefs as enabling
19	Sithembile and her snake	• Friends as enabling
20	The lion and the robin	• Self as enabling • Friends as enabling
21	The silver tree	• Cultural practice and beliefs as enabling
22	Instant poison	• Self as enabling

ADDENDUM I

RM2R TRAINING

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
VAAL TRIANGLE CAMPUS
®

Excerpt from Rm2R training, April 2009, 2010: participating fieldworkers

1.   Explain that the aim is to test whether the story contents support children towards resilience. There are ample studies proving that healthy attachments support children towards resilience. If fieldworkers bond with children/form caring attachments, then it could be that the attachment made the difference and not the story contents.

2.   Story process:

a. It is better to **tell** than to read the story.

b. **Engage** the **participants' attention**, but **limit interaction** with them (e.g. forming a relationship/answering questions/explaining the theme of the story).

c. **Instruction at beginning of session:** I am going to tell you a story. I want you to sit quietly and listen. We are not going to talk about the story or what it means, but when it is finished you can think about the story if you like.

d. **Instruction at end of session:** That was today's story. I will come again (next week/date) to tell you another one.

e. Leave as soon as the story is complete.

3.   Record your thoughts/feelings/reflections (see diary instructions) as soon as possible after having read a story.

4.   Please contact .... [study leader name] or Prof. Theron (016 910 3076) should you have any questions or concerns.

ADDENDUM J

PARTICIPATING LEARNER'S DESCRIPTIONS

Participant	Total number of learners	Risk factors	Average age	Race & language	Sex
P1	10	Behavioural problems; learning difficulty; domestic violence; poverty; orphans	9	Black: SeSotho; isiZulu	5 boys; 5 girls
P2	5	Orphans	9	Black: SeSotho	3 boys; 2 girls
P3	5	Orphans	10	Black:SeSotho; isiXhosa	2 boys; 3 girls
P4	5	Orphans	11	Black:isiXhosa	3 boys; 2 girls
P5	6	Orphans; learning difficulty; behavioural problems	9	Black: SeSotho	2 boys; 2 girls
P6	7	Orphans; learning difficulty; behavioural problems; poverty	9	Black: SeSotho	4 boys; 3 girls
P7	5	Orphans; learning difficulty; behavioural problems; poverty; domestic violence	14	Black: SeSotho	4 boys; 1 girl
P8	7	Poverty; behavioural problems; learning difficulty; orphans	9	Black: SeSotho; isiZulu; Venda	5 boys; 2 girls
P9	6	Orphans; behavioural problems; domestic violence; poverty; learning difficulty	10	Black: SeSotho; isiZulu	4 boys; 2 girls
P10	5	Orphans	14	Black: isiXhosa	3 boys; 2 girls
P11	9	Orphans; poverty	9	Black: isiZulu; Tswana	1 boy; 8 girls
P12	5	Orphans	12	Black: SeSotho	3 boys; 2 girls
P13	6	Orphans	10	Black: SeSotho	4 boys; 2 girls
P14	5	Orphans; poverty; behavioural problems; domestic violence	11	Black: isiZulu; SeSotho	1 boy; 4 girls
P15	5	Orphans; poverty	9	Black: Tswana; isiZulu	3 boys; 2 girls
P16	5	Orphans; poverty	10	Black: SeSotho; isiZulu	3 boys; 2 girls

ADDENDUM K

TURN-IT-IN PROCESS

Interpretation of reports and signing off for submission for examination[3]

1. Supervisor and student use Turn-it-in to evaluate the % similarity to sources either at the end of the writing process/during the process when each chapter is in some sort of "final" stage.

2. The supervisor and the student read the Turn-it-in report and determine what the biggest trends related to % of similarities are. See the document attached that could assist them to identify trends.

3. Supervisor writes a brief report (letter) to indicate how s/he and the candidate worked on the revision of the text to limit the % of similarities since the last Turn-it-in report.

4. When the candidate is ready to submit for examination, the following documents are sent to the Director Research Development in the Faculty or the Research Entity director/leader:

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[3] Technical support to operate the Turn-it-in programme is with ADS via Ms Elne Papenfus.

4.1   Report by supervisor that explains how the Turn-it-in report was used to improve/revise the dissertation/thesis (hard copy/electronic).

4.2   The latest Turn-it-in report (electronic).

4.3   The final version of the thesis/dissertation (electronic).

5. The Director Research Development/Research Entity Director/Leader then engages with the three documents and writes a report in which the nature of the similarities reported in the Turn-it-in report is described, spot checks were done to see if changes were made appropriately in the final text and ultimately s/he reflects on the risk of plagiarism presented in the text. Based on this report, advice is given to the supervisor and academic administration official in terms of permission to submit for examination.

6. The Directors Research Development (in collaboration with the ADS officer who provides technical support for Turn-it-in) offer Turn-it-in workshops from time to time in the faculties to train staff and students in the interpretation process.

END OF PROCESS

Analysis of quotations identified by Turn-It-In

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
VAAL TRIANGLE CAMPUS ®

Name of student

Student number

Title of document

Study leader / promoter

Type of Turn-it-In identification	% impression	Action required by student
A) Plagiarism		**PROBLEMATIC:** Study leader should consider disciplinary action! Direct quotation of words from another source without " " and without the acknowledgement of the source. Insert the " " and the source immediately.
B) Long quote - fully acknowledged		**Problematic**: Decide if the long quotation is absolutely necessary. If possible, rephrase in own words and still acknowledge the source. If not possible to rephrase, the make sure the " " are in place to indicate direct quotation.
		Important decision to make: can the M or PhD still be awarded if a LARGE % of the text consists of DIRECT QUOTATIONS?
C) Appropriate brief quotations		No action necessary
D) "Coined" phrases related to description of research methodology / statistics reporting.		No action necessary
E) Everyday use - no unique ideas related to phrase used / names of places / name of policy / law etc.		No action necessary
F) Direct matches to previous versions of dissertation or thesis / Reference to same text to ensure consistency in reporting		No action necessary. Should actually not happen because text must be excluded.

General remarks

Assessed by: AS Coetzee-Van Rooy   (Director Research Development: Faculty of Humanities, VTC)

DATE: