'This Time it's Personal':

A Heuristic Study of the Process of Becoming an Integrative Psychotherapist.

A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology in the Faculty of Humanities

2015

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Abstract

University of Manchester; Cathal O'Connor; Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology; 'This Time it's Personal': A Heuristic Study of the Process of Becoming an Integrative Psychotherapist. (April, 2015)

The aim of this research was to explore my personal experience of becoming an integrative psychotherapist using Moustakas' theory of heuristic enquiry to facilitate thematic analysis of my own reflective journals. There is currently no agreed-upon method for trainees to go about constructing an integrative philosophy of practice or to engage in personal development.

The literature is inconclusive as to what best facilitates learning in therapist trainees, and there is a paucity of empirical research on psychotherapy training. The research on the manner in which integrative therapy is taught has not developed in line with progress made in theory and practice. Personal development has been found to be useful overall, however the means of accomplishing this has not been agreed upon. Reflective writing in the form of personal journaling has been put forward as an appropriate method, for both personal and professional development.

My reflective journal constituted the data in this study. The data was analysed using thematic analysis within a heuristic design framework. Therefore, I was both the participant and the researcher in the study. Themes which manifested from the analysis of the reflective journal were around personal development, ('trainee anxiety' and 'procrastination and boredom anxiety') and professional development ('making sense of theoretical ambiguity', 'searching for a needle of truth in a post-modern haystack', 'axiomatic 'truth' as a means of facilitating integration', 'the practical application of illumination'). The utility of constructing an integrative framework and a common factor or an integrative axiom to facilitate theoretically consistent integrative practice were found to be of value in terms of both practice and training.

The findings are discussed in terms of my personal experience of constructing an integrative theory of practice and the contribution my heuristic investigation of reflective writing can offer to integrative psychotherapy training. Reflective writing for professional development and development of an integrative theory of practice was found to have utility in my training and was proposed as a reliable method for future trainees to utilise. It was found to be less useful and ethical in terms of personal development.

Personal and professional implications are discussed. Strengths of the current research cited are its trustworthiness in terms of the quantity of data gathered and the reliability of interpretation that came from the fact that the participant was also the researcher. Limitations of the research are noted as being its potential to be seen as overly subjective. Future research directions are outlined in the form of further qualitative research looking into self-esteem and therapy outcomes and comparisons of the experiences of training with and without a reflective component.
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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, my first, best teachers. Mom, you taught me to be compassionate just by your example and Dad, you instilled in me the thirst for knowledge, and curiosity about the world, that fuelled this project.

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Primarily, I would like to thank Dr Clare Lennie, who reigned me in and kept me on track, but also let me go and learn and be myself. You believed that I could get this done when there was no evidence to support that belief.

To Dr William West, who enthusiastically introduced me to this world. You were a constant source of inspiration.

Thanks to my house-mates, you are my family in Manchester. Also, to my lifelong friends back home in Ireland. The support from all of you is so appreciated, I can't even tell you.

Most of all, to my sister, Niamh, the most courageous person I know. In this, as in all areas of my life, when I didn't feel strong enough, I borrowed some of your strength.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

In this chapter, I begin by introducing myself, and my engagement with the problem to be solved, and I go on to explain how this influenced my choices around research design, and how the research question generated the methodology, as suggested by Patton (1990). I then set out my approach to the thesis, I explain it's structure and layout and how heuristic inquiry manifested within it. This chapter is about my subjective engagement with the research and will attempt to capture what Clark Moustakas (1990) calls the initial engagement with the subject matter. This is elaborated upon in the methodology chapter.

The person of the researcher: What's past is prologue

Heuristic research is based around the concept of using the 'self' as a tool in the research process (Moustakas, 1990). I will therefore begin by introducing myself using an extract from my reflective journal (which forms the data for the current study) which was written in a different, more humorous context, parodying an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, but seems to be somewhat appropriate here:

16/02/12:
Hello, everyone. My name is Cathal, and I am a psychology-aholic. I have an addiction. There is a power greater than myself. I acknowledge that I am weak before it. I am fascinated by why people do what they do and think the way that they think. I cannot get enough of deliberating and philosophising about the human condition and I know that I can never, ever have just one 'think'.

I include this excerpt to demonstrate the main reason I undertook this project. To satisfy my own interest in a topic that captivated me in much the same way that Moustakas (1990) tells us that the researcher should initially engage with his research question. He describes how the topic should call out to the researcher on a personal level so that he might engage fully in the process of self dialogue and indwelling, to facilitate unconscious and tacit knowledge to
become illuminated in consciousness. Heuristic research will be explored further, later in the thesis, however, for now I mention it to discuss what drew me to this obscure method of research.

My relationship with psychology began with my undergraduate studies and continued throughout my counselling training, my masters degree in health psychology and into my doctoral studies in counselling psychology. In my first degree in psychology, which was largely focused on the cognitive paradigm, I elected to 'minor' in psycho-analysis and philosophy. I became interested in Freud's concept of the unconscious mind (Freud, 1901) and unearthing that which we do not know that we know, as well as the idea that human beings are infinitely complex. This undoubtedly foreshadowed my interest in heuristic research. By the time I began my doctorate in counselling psychology, it had become clear that all the perspectives in psychology, and in particular psychotherapy, were confusing and interesting and often totally contradictory. I was fascinated by, studying, and working providing, something which I did not fully understand and which didn't completely make sense. It was this desire to make sense of psychotherapy that led me to choose heuristics as a methodology.

**There is an 'I' in thesis**

I will now provide some more personal and professional information about myself in order to provide a context to the findings that I will discuss later in the study. I am 32 year-old, caucasian Irish man. I moved to the UK in 2008, first living in London, where I completed my masters degree and worked in health psychology, before moving to Manchester to pursue my doctoral studies. While my early training in psychotherapy had been largely behavioural in nature, in my doctorate I gravitated to the more humanistic and existential approaches. This decision was to contrast greatly with the choices I made about where to do my clinical practice placements. My first placement was in an NHS IAPT service. IAPT is an acronym for Improving Access to Psychological Therapy and is based on the use of the correct referral pathways for the specific disorder that the client presented with in order to provide a tiered system of support where those diagnosed with more serious mental health problems would receive more
expert treatment. I mainly worked with clients and had been diagnosed with clinical depression, generalised anxiety disorder, PTSD as well as clients dealing with issues around childhood sexual abuse. It was based on a CBT model and the therapy was supposed to be structured and relatively brief. I had many difficulties working in this service, as the way I practiced, and my beliefs about helping, were not oriented to this philosophy.

In another placement, I worked in the family therapy service of a cancer charity. I had some difficulties with the brief nature of the therapy I was expected to provide here, with there being an implicit expectation that bereaved clients might require one or two sessions to work through their loss. I also struggled personally with this work because during my time in this setting, both of my parents were diagnosed with cancer and my father had a quadruple bypass. I facilitated a therapy group for prison staff at Manchester Prison as one of my other placement settings, where I attempted to use the ideas of existential group therapy in a setting where these ideas could be considered alien. In my final placement I worked in a Complex Cases service in the NHS which also allowed me to work in the Crisis Resolution Team. In the crisis team I provided brief therapy to very high risk clients as well as working with a multidisciplinary team with a focus on appropriate referral protocols. In the Complex Cases service I worked with clients with similar presenting problems but managed to provide them with more long-term therapy. I worked with clients who had been diagnosed with antisocial personality disorder, borderline personality disorder, psychosis and paranoid personality disorder, among others. By this time my therapeutic approach had evolved to incorporate an even greater emphasis on relational depth and working with my own counter-transferences. I had some difficulties in relating so personally with clients who had experienced, as well perpetrated, such severe abuse. In none of the placements I undertook did my therapeutic practice fit with the service I was in and this only served to further exacerbate my theoretical dysphoria. Constantly having to defend my therapeutic interventions, often to individuals who had no acquaintance with the theoretical paradigms from which I was operating, drove me to educate myself as thoroughly as I could on psychotherapy theory and to try to solve the problem of psychotherapy integration.
Statement of the problem

The problem of integration is discussed in greater detail later in this study, and the concepts of psycho-dynamic principles contradicting those of the cognitive school of thinking, and the third-wave of humanism stating other 'truths', is examined in detail. Suffice to say that this was my problem. Because of psychotherapy existing in a pre-paradigmatic state (Cooper & McLeod, 2011), I could be taught about the various schools of therapy, but I could not be told which was correct, or what parts of which theories were right or effective. That was something that trainees are expected to figure out, despite the fact that none of the great minds in psychology over the past hundred years had been able to come up with a universally agreed upon idea on this. To make things more complicated, my theoretical integration was taking place in the realm of counselling psychology, a discipline which holds as important the validity of multiple truths and celebrates the diversity of various world views (Woolfe, Strawbridge, Douglas & Dryden, 2010).

When I first became acquainted with Heuristic Inquiry, its focus on “passionate and discerning personal involvement in problem solving” (Moustakas & Douglas, 1985, p. 39) seemed to fit with the manner in which I would need to go about overcoming my integrative quandary. It seemed that this “effort to know the essence of some aspect of life through the internal pathways of the self” (Moustakas & Douglas, 1985, p. 39), was exactly the challenge that I was undertaking. This subjectivity on the part of the researcher echoed the emphasis that counselling psychology places on personal development and the value it puts on cultivating self-awareness. I therefore decided to be the participant and the researcher in the current study using my reflective journal writing as data. In this way the heuristic process became a way for me to harness the four components of Counselling Psychology training - theory, practice, research and personal development (BPS, 2013).

As I engaged in the heuristic process, the problem became not only that I had to come up with my own solution to this problem, but also, that I had to construct my own means of doing so. The fact that the training process stubbornly insists that we work this out for ourselves acknowledges the subjective nature of this
process. The focus of the research became not just that training is not (and should not, in my opinion) be prescriptive about how trainee's integrate, but that it does not provide a structured means of accomplishing this goal (Norcross & Beutler, 2000). Personal development and professional development in terms of constructing an integrative theory of practice, are central to the process of counselling psychology training. However, their facilitation is largely left to chance and their assessment in terms of the producing of competent practitioners is lacking.

The structure of my research

The structure of my research is now explained. This study sought to facilitate my exploration of psychotherapy theories and integration. This took place by my keeping a reflective journal which became a place to consolidate learning and engage in philosophical debate. The journal also served a 'meta' function of exploring my personal development and my emotional reactions to this process, and how my subjective experience and opinions led to the choices I made around psychotherapy. Extracts from my reflective journal are presented and analysed in the data analysis section, but there are some relevant excerpts placed throughout the text. They are presented largely the way they were originally written and I decided not to edit out the significant amount of swearing that appears in the excerpts, as I believe that it helps to convey the authenticity of the visceral, less cognitive nature of the emotional discussions I was having with myself on paper. This demonstrates my removing of 'professional armour' for reflective writing as recommended by Sheperd (2006). Excerpts appear in italicised Times New Roman font, to represent my voice as participant, while the majority of the rest of the thesis is presented in Arial font, to represent my researcher role. The heuristic stages of initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication and creative synthesis, implicitly manifested in all of these levels of analysis, and a fluid movement back and forth between these phases occurred, as recommended by West (2001), however the way these stages functioned in the overarching research design is described in the methodology chapter.

References to popular culture, and in particular, science-fiction appear
throughout the excerpts from the reflective journal, and these have no particular significance other than representing my own personal interests and view of the world. Before undertaking my studies in psychology, I went to art college and studied computer animation and graphics. This interest manifests in the pieces of visual art that I present as the creative synthesis section in the data analysis chapter. Another notable point is that I generally refer to the interaction of the helper and the person coming for help as ‘psychotherapy’ or simply ‘therapy’. I do this because that is how it has always been refereed to in my placement settings, where terms such as ‘counselling’ or ‘psychoanalysis’ carry with them assumptions of the approached used. I feel that the terms ‘psychotherapy’ or ‘therapy’ come with the least theoretical baggage and can describe most broadly the integrative helping relationship. I choose not to use the word ‘counselling’ despite my training being in counselling psychology as a way of acknowledging the range of opinions and definitions around what constitutes counselling psychology. This is elaborated upon below.

**What is counselling psychology?**

The British Psychological Society (BPS) defines counselling psychology as a branch of applied professional psychology with its origins in the humanistic tradition (BPS, 2011). It seeks to work within the parameters of enduring mental health services as well as working with what it refers to as ‘problems of living’. It is intentionally philosophical in its approach and it “seeks to develop phenomenological models of practice and inquiry, in addition to that of traditional scientific psychology” (BPS, 2011, no page). Counselling psychology strives to “respect first person accounts as valid in their own terms” (BPS, 2011, no page), and to embrace subjective truths. An explicit goal of counselling psychology is to “elucidate, interpret and negotiate between perceptions and world views but not to assume the automatic superiority of any one way of experiencing, feeling, valuing or knowing” (BPS, 2011, no page). It advocates a research base grounded in professional practice with the intention of producing reflective practitioners. This emphasis on phenomenological philosophy, first person accounts and subjectivity and how they lead to the development of a reflective practitioner, is what the current study seeks to investigate.
Counselling psychology training addresses four components of professional development: theory, clinical practice, research and personal development. In a field which embraces ambiguities and subjectivities, the way in which training addresses these components requires investigation. The learning process seeks to equip trainees with the ability to explore and tolerate ambiguity in order to produce grounded practitioners. This study aims to investigate a possible method of training to facilitate trainees making sense of this ambiguity in their personal and professional development.

Counselling psychology is a relatively new discipline and doctoral level study is still in its infancy (Woolfe, Strawbridge, Douglas & Dryden, 2010). Little has thus far been written about the way counselling psychologists learn, and in particular the experience of becoming a practitioner who uses an integrative model of therapy has been explored to a very limited extent (Lowndes & Hanley, 2010). As the practice of counselling psychology, and indeed all forms of therapy, are gravitating more and more toward integrative practice, and the concept of integration is another ambiguity that exists within training, the idea of integration must be introduced.

**Integration**

Within the last 25 years, the field of psychotherapy has been moving more toward integration. Integration can be defined as the blending together of both theory and practice in the foundational schools of psychotherapy (Nuttall, 2008). Hollanders described it as “the process of bringing things together, with the implication of making something whole and new” (Hollanders, 1997, p. 16). There are a number of established concepts of integration. Some of the most accepted and discussed theories of integration are Theoretical Integration (Allen, Kennedy, Veeser & Grosso, 2000), Technical Eclecticism (Lazarus, 2005), Assimilative Integration (Boswell, Nelson, Nordberg, McAleavey & Castonguay, 2010), The Common Factors approach (Asay and Lambert, 1999) and Pluralism (Cooper and McLeod, 2007). Each of these approaches emphasises the importance of integrating the foundational schools to various degrees and differently in terms of theory and practice. Theoretical integration focuses on the merging of approaches on the level of theory, while technical
eclecticism can be seen as its opposite, where the utilising of various therapeutic techniques can occur with little concern given to theoretical consistency as long as the outcomes are proved efficacious. Assimilation integration holds that a therapist can identify with a particular theory of practice, while integrating certain techniques when it is deemed necessary and useful. The common factors approach looks at the elements of therapy that are common to all approaches which bring about therapeutic change and seeks to emphasise these in practice. Pluralism is a philosophy based on the post-modern belief that there exists multiple truths and that different clients with different problems require different therapeutic methods.

It is estimated that there are over 450 different types of therapy (Norcross, 2005). Therefore the concept of integration fitting neatly into one of these categories is difficult to reconcile. Integration is an inherently complex and personal process. Cooper and McLeod, (2011) discuss some of the psychological issues that occur within the practitioner who sets themselves the task of developing an integrative theory of practice. They refer to Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), and the 'in-group' and 'out-group' research, and that we as people, and therefore we as therapists, like to feel positive about the group that we are in, in order to feel better about ourselves. This, they hypothesise, might impact our ability to be objective about the various approaches, might lead us to take sides in the 'turf-wars' that occur in relation to therapy and might lead us to dismiss certain facets of various theories out of emotional attachments to our own 'home-base'. They talk also about Cognitive Dissonance (Festinger, 1957) and the fact that human beings are motivated, to a large extent, by their desire not to have to rethink their choices, and to therefore have to re-evaluate their view of the world. This desire for consistency can potentially get in the way of the person of the therapist being able to hold together and engage with the complexities of challenging theories.

Counselling and psychotherapy are still in a pre-paradigmatic state (Kuhn, 1970; Norcross, 2005) so the questions around integration are many and complex. Is the universe as messy as Cooper and McLeod (2011) argue it to be? Does therapy work for a number of different reasons, in different ways at different times, or is there one underlying answer, that we need to keep
searching for? Can we find one? Should we keep searching until we do? Within integration there is a distinction between integration on the level of theory and eclecticism on the level of practice and between the idea that there are common factors, or fundamental truths which underpin the utility of therapy or that there is nothing specific which ties together the different strands of effective therapies.

What is psychotherapy?

To ask what integration is, is to ask about what psychotherapy is. It is generally agreed that Freudian psycho-analysis was the beginning of formalised psychotherapy, though it is clear that helping in different forms existed in less structured manner long before Freud decided that two people should sit in a room together in hourly increments discussing the issues of the one he called the patient (Claringbull, 2010). Freud’s conceptualisation of therapy was based on the importance of unconscious thoughts and desires. He argued the sexual aetiology of neurosis, the stages of childhood development and the Oedipus complex as being central to the work of the therapist who facilitated movement of unconscious material into the conscious mind, in order for catharsis to take place. Behaviourism came about as a reaction to this, with Pavlov (1927) proposing the idea of the classically conditioned response and Skinner (1971) developing this to include even very complex behaviours. Cognitive psychology built on this with Ellis (1962) putting forward the idea that it was not the events that occurred that distressed people, but instead it was the thoughts and beliefs that people attached to the events which caused emotional suffering. Beck (1964) elaborated on this, citing dysfunctional thoughts as being the reason for depression. Behaviourism gained much of its popularity from the fact that it's hypotheses readily lend themselves to empirical investigation, and an emphasis on evidence based practice could follow. Humanism is considered to be the third wave of psychology, coming from the ideas of Maslow, Spinelli, Perls and in particular Rogers. The central tenets of the humanistic approach is that people have within themselves the capacity to effectively conceptualise and solve their own problems, and that the role of the therapist is largely one of facilitation (Rogers, 1957). This emphasis on the client as being the expert of his or her own experience led to a conceptualisation of the therapeutic relationship as needing to be experienced as a real and genuine interaction
between two people, which is somewhat at odds with a less authentic relationship that the psychodynamic and cognitive therapies espouse. The humanist movement in psychology was a philosophy very much of its time, born out of the deconstructivist liberation philosophy the latter half of the 20th century and the individualist ideas of North American culture (Claringbull, 2010).

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have introduced myself and provided some context on my professional work as well as my personal thinking in order to provide a foundation to this study. I discuss why the research question was so important to me personally as well as professionally and my motivation behind involving myself in such in-depth and personal research method as heuristics. I give a statement of the problem that I will use heuristic inquiry to attempt to address and I outline the structure of my research. I then introduce counselling psychology and integration to position the research before I briefly explore the history of psychotherapy. The sections on integration and psychotherapy in this chapter are kept relatively brief, as they are elaborated upon later in the research and discussion of what constitutes both psychotherapy and integration runs throughout the study.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The intention of this literature review is firstly to discuss how research into psychotherapy and integration have been carried out in the past, before examining the literatures on the training process. The importance of personal and professional development in counselling psychology training is then discussed and the literature on therapist training generally is reviewed, including skills training, supervision and personal development. The key aspects of therapist training are explored and the literature review concludes with a discussion on trainees constructing an integrative theory of practice and the use of reflective writing for personal development. Because of the personal and subjective nature of this study, in my review of the literature, I discuss my own opinions and reactions to the studies I cite in order to be transparent about how they affected my reflective process, which is at the core of this research.

Researching psychotherapy and integration

With the three foundational theories of psychotherapy existing in contention with one another, all having displayed some validity and elements of utility, the concept of integrating and building upon these philosophies came about. Approaches such as gestalt, existential, systemic, psychodrama, cognitive-analytic, emotion focused, solution focused, compassion focused, feminist, mindfulness, acceptance and commitment therapy, transpersonal, narrative therapy and many more developed. Questions then arose such as which therapy is best? Which ones are less effective? How do we measure efficacy? Is therapeutic efficacy something which can be measured, or is it too complex and subtle? Are there complex and subtle means of testing therapy? Are qualitative or quantitative methodologies more appropriate for this task? It has been stated that the history of therapy research essentially revolves around
three questions: “Does therapy work? How does it work? Is it cost-effective and how can we best provide it?” (Claringbull, 2010 p. 13). Eysenck's 1952 study appeared to show that 65 percent of neurotics spontaneously recovered over time, without the help of psychotherapy, which was equal to the group receiving psychotherapy (Eysenck, 1952). Therefore, it would seem that we, as researchers, cannot legitimately work from the standpoint that psychotherapy is, in fact, effective. In their study in the 1970's, Luborsky, Singer and Luborsky (1975) demonstrated an equivalency of efficacy for all psychotherapies, which became known as the dodo-bird verdict, referencing Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland character who stated that - “All have won, so all shall get prizes” (Luborsky, Singer & Luborsky, 1975). The efficacy of therapy and the equivalency of outcome has continued to receive attention from researchers over the years (Stiles, Barkham, Mellor-Clark & Connell, 2007; Ward, King, Lloyd, Bower, Sibbald, Farrelly, Tarrier & Addington-Hall, 2000). William James, one of the founding fathers of psychology argues against the defining and researching of psychotherapy methodologies saying that “it is an old story of a useful practice first becoming a method, then a habit, and finally a tyranny that defeats the end it was used for” (James, 1996, p.219). The more post-modern viewpoint tells us that we may never get the clarity that our research strives to produce, stating that “any substantial question admits a variety of plausible but mutually conflicting responses” (Rescher, 1993 p. 79). With this level of ambiguity existing around psychotherapy, integration and the researching of these these phenomena, it is exceedingly difficult to create meaningful research questions and effective research methodologies. Indeed, the move toward evidence based culture in therapy has the capacity to lead to empirical evidence becoming privileged over other ways of knowing (Cooper & McLeod, 2011). If none of these things can be agreed upon then how can we go about the important business of training effective therapists?

My own views on the above questions have fluctuated substantially over the years. Earlier in the study, when I discussed my initial engagement with psychology in the introduction section, I wrote of my curiosity about people and my interest in connecting with others at a deep level, even as a child, as well as the appeal of discussing with them their problems or their hopes or fears. I
entered into my learning about therapy feeling certain that talking about one's problems or one's feelings or one's experience in any way was beneficial, although I wasn't certain why exactly that was. At the same time, as I became better acquainted with the various theories of psychotherapy I was made aware of the disharmony that exists within the field. I don't remember ever particularly thinking that one approach was the definitive solution, but rather that each theory had something interesting to say about the world. I loved studying all approaches to psychotherapy and never found a theory that I wasn't interested in on some level, even if the utilising of the more directive therapies didn't sit well with me in practice. Throughout my training, I always held the belief that therapy works and that integration is possible, despite what some research might appear to demonstrate. Initially I had a desire which came from insecurity, to demonstrate the efficacy of therapy so that my job wasn't meaningless, however as I continued, I became more comfortable with the idea that I was actually helping people. Then I started to wonder about why therapy works, and if in fact all therapy works and if so, for what reason? My doctoral programme was philosophically pluralist, if that is not an oxymoron. I say that because while at the beginning of my training, I had an interest in technical ecclesiastism and pluralism as they appealed to my pragmatic side, I came to later view them as theoretically modest. I came to view assimilative integration as theoretically inconsistent and eventually decided that it was theoretical integration and the common factors where I would find my own personal integrative truth. I did however always hold that integration was possible, if something of a challenge. The research throw ups so many questions that it is first necessary to know where one sits throughout such a subjective research process. However, one thing that the research seems to be consistent on, is that if therapy works and therapy can be effectively researched, and there is an equivalency of outcome across therapies, then “the 'who' of the therapist is just as important as the 'how' of the therapeutic methodology that is being employed” (Claringbull, 2010 p. 20). Therefore, it seems clear that personal and professional development in trainee therapists needs to be fostered in training programs and evaluated in a meaningful way.
Personal and professional development in counselling psychology training

There has been relatively little research into the experience of trainee counselling psychologists (Kumary & Baker, 2008), and this project aims to address this deficit. As a discipline which emphasises subjective meaning, interpretation and the idea of multiple truths (Blair, 2010), counselling psychology positions itself firmly in the post-modern arena. For this reason, as a trainee counselling psychologist, I felt there was a need for a systematic examination of the processes of becoming an integrative practitioner and being trained to tolerate ambiguity. It is the aim of the my research to explore in particular the concept of personal development and the personal nature of developing an integrative theory of practice, as well as its potential positioning within counselling psychology training and the impact of personal development on professional development. The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) requires accredited prgrammes to include a personal development component but has been non-prescriptive about the form it should take (Wright, 2005). I have always felt that personal development was an integral part of therapy training. My stance changed over time, from having a basic understanding of it in my early health psychology work, with simplistic ideas such as 'you have to know what your stuff is so you don't bring it into the therapy with you', to a more complex conceptualisation around the fact that 'if the relationship is the work, then the personal development of the therapist must be paramount'.

What is personal development?

Daniels and Feltham suggest that personal development can be defined as “the consciously applied intention to change aspects of one’s own life” (Daniels & Feltham, 2004, p.182), and Johns (2000) states the development of self-awareness in the counsellor practitioner through the process of personal development to be invaluable in terms of developing as a therapist (Johns, 2000). He goes on to discuss the positioning of personal development within training programs, saying that it is not an event, but a process, and that it will happen incidentally, throughout every training course, and beyond, and that it
permeates all aspects of life and work (Johns, 2000). While I agree that personal development cannot fail to take place when one is engaged in therapy training, I personally find the idea of personal development as incidental and something that will occur without any attention to it, difficult to accept. I find it difficult to believe that training which involves no formalised personal development whatsoever can have the same outcomes as programmes that hold it as being central to the learning process. Personal therapy and personal development groups are established methods of facilitating this process, however, research findings regarding the efficacy of such processes is both limited and inconclusive (Lennie, 2007). Therefore, I came to believe that another method which can be more useful to trainee's, as well as more rigorously measured and assessed, was required.

Since the early 1980s in the UK, training for nurses, teachers, and psychologists has included reflective journal writing as part of developing 'reflective practice', but has received little specific research attention in terms of training (Wright, 2005). Daniels and Feltham (2004) suggest that writing personal journals could become a substitute for personal therapy in counselling and psychotherapy training, and Wright (2005) states the need for this suggestion to be urgently researched (Wright, 2005). It is unclear as to how training helps therapists become better practitioners. Indeed, despite the fact that therapist training is the most studied of all therapist variables (Beutler, Malik, Alimohame, Harwood, Talebi, Noble & Wong, 2004), there is very little evidence to suggest that training has any correlation to 'therapist skill' or 'therapeutic success' (Ibid). The idea that training might have little to no effect on therapist efficacy is personally very disconcerting and believing as I do that training is, or at least can be effective, then I must conclude that either current training protocols are ineffective and need to be altered, or the research into therapist training is focused in the wrong areas. Therefore, it seems there is a necessity for research into what it is that makes a therapist 'successful', what improves their skills, and how these factors can be incorporated into therapist training to ensure that training does begin to have an impact on practice.

In an effort to understand the changes experienced by trainees and to identify which aspects of a professional training programs assist trainees in becoming
competent therapists, Folkes-Skinner, Elliott and Wheeler, (2010) carried out a systematic qualitative analysis on interviews from one student's experience of the process. While they acknowledge that an examination of one trainee's experience is somewhat limited, they also stated that understanding one person's experience in depth was their goal. They state a limitation of the study to be the overly structured nature of the interview schedule which may have prevented important topics from arising (Foulkes-Skinner, Elliott & Wheeler, 2010). This study will attempt to overcome this limitation through the examination of a reflective journal kept over a longer period of time (three years), with the topics of reflection generated by the participant alone, myself, free from external prompts. I agree with Folkes-Skinner, Elliott and Wheeler, (2010) in their assertion that the understanding of one person's experience can go into great depth and therefore provide meaningful information on the process of learning, and it is this very belief that I attempt to demonstrate with my research.

It is clear that the ideas of 'personal development' and 'personal growth' are poorly understood (Irving and Williams, 1999) and the definition of what constitutes personal development requires further, more in-depth research. Lennie (2007) discusses the limitations of the research up until this point and suggests a need for a "rather more heuristic stance" (Lennie, 2007 p.128), where the researcher acknowledges their role in the process. In order to discuss personal and professional development in training, it is necessary to look at what the literature tells us about the training process.

**Therapist training**

Castonguay (2005) says that "the maturity of a scientific and professional domain may well be reflected by the level of systematic and formal attention it has given to training". (Castonguay, 2005, p.384). Robertson, (1986) states that training has been largely neglected within the field of psychotherapy integration. He points out that "psychotherapy training in an academic environment is often just that: academic - "long on teaching by exposition and short on teaching by practice" (Robertson, 1986, p.209). He discusses the nature of the transition
from talking about therapy to doing therapy, and how abrupt and jarring this transition can be to trainees. He writes of the equal importance of the development of technical skills and the acquisition of interpersonal qualities such as compassion, empathy, relational immediacy, non-judgemental confrontation and therapist self-disclosure as discussed by Lewis (1978). He goes on to discuss the optimal combination of empathic understanding with the deployment of clinical skills or the flexible moving between the detached and objective to the intimate and empathic. Peterson and Bry's (1980) study of supervisors criteria of therapeutic competence highlights four factors, professional responsibility, interpersonal warmth, intellectual acuity and a set of qualities that are closely associated with professional experience.

Kaslow and colleagues, (2007) argue a need for strict definition and management of competence problems, in trainee psychologists and indeed for psychologists at all levels, stating a lack of competence among practising psychologists to be detrimental to the welfare of consumers of psychological services and to lay the ground work for malpractice lawsuits (Kaslow, Rubin, Forrest, Elman, Van Horne, Jacobs, Huprich, Benton, Pantesco, Dollinger, Grus, Benhke, Miller, Shealy, Mintz, Schwartz-Mette, Van Sickle & Thorn, 2007). They propose establishing benchmarks for performance and specific criteria for professional competence, with an ethical, regulatory and litigation-based underpinning. While they claim not to want to present in a fashion akin to 'Big Brotherism', their proposal cannot escape an Orwellian feel. While they claim a desire for the creation of a culture that supports self-assessment and self-disclosure, this is perhaps not the spirit of their writing.

Professional development in psychology has been claimed to be a poorly understood and defined concept, with little clarity about how it is achieved or developed (Skovholt & Ronnestad, 1992). Research into the nature of professional development asked graduate students in psychology about their opinions on what professional development actually was, and whether their training program was sufficient in providing them with it (Ducheny, Alletzhauser, Crandell & Schneider, 1997). Students felt that time management skills, development of fund proposal writing skills and awareness of professional
stages of development were lacking in their training, but interestingly did not refer specifically to factors explicitly relating to therapeutic competence. One cannot help but wonder if the settings in which they gained employment after qualifying put emphasis on these professional and administrative skills while perhaps overlooking the monitoring of their newly graduated psychologists' competence as therapists. This raises the question that if therapist competence at a theoretical or relational level is not developed or assessed correctly during training, can qualified clinicians make it through their entire careers without this potential deficit being highlighted? If this is the case, one might wonder why the more pragmatically minded trainee would bother to become competent in these areas in a very thorough manner?

Ducheny, Alletzhouser, Crandell, and Schneider, (1997) argue that Skovholt & Ronnestad's, (1992) stages of professional development are restrictive and overly simplistic. They put forward an organising mechanism for professional development which is situated within the concept of professional identity. This, they argue, is not simply a uniform set of experiences and skills, but is a complex process incorporating personal and professional experiences, and profession-based and individual values and skills (Ducheny, Alletzhouser, Crandell, & Schneider, 1997).

Mowrer (1950), writes about two extremes in which the opinions on training therapists seem to cluster. Psychoanalytic therapists, he tells us, have taken a position at one extreme of a continuum, holding that treatment and training are not fundamentally different, hence the tradition of personal analysis for psychoanalytic trainees (Mowrer, 1950). In opposition, is the opinion that psychotherapy can be practised by anyone who is privy to a few simple rules and techniques and requires little focus on the personal qualities of the practitioner. Ultimately, however, he decides in favour of the concept of 'personal maturity' being fostered over a "fixed, invariant training routine" (Mowrer, 1950 p. 274). He refers to therapy as a "thoroughly creative process", (Mowrer, 1950 p. 274) saying that "proficiency as a therapist calls for talents which at present lie beyond the scope of established tests or formal teaching methods" (Mowrer, 1950 p. 274). He accepts the problems inherent to this in
terms of training and the difficulties of attempting to foster this quality in novice therapists. This leads to certain questions around training. If we, as integrative practitioners, acknowledge that psychotherapy can encompass either of these philosophies, how can we train in both? If the way of training in a therapeutic approach should mirror the type of therapeutic approach one is being trained in, how does one train in integrative psychotherapy?

It has been stated that "quality assurance in the preparation of mental health professionals is assumed more often than verified" (Alberts & Edelstein, 1990). Indeed, Ford's (1979) review of the literature on therapist training showed little correlation between training interventions and improvement in trainee's skill level. It has been argued that the training process and content is so variable across graduate education programs that it is impossible to determine competency of a graduate (Hirschenberger, McGuire & Thomas, 1987). Alberts & Edelstein, (1990) strongly dispute this. They claim that the task of evaluating competence is formidable yet essential and in fact, fully accomplishable and that any claims to the contrary are unfounded. However, they go on to state it to be beyond the scope of their work to outline procedures and issues involved in training competency evaluation (Alberts & Edelstein, 1990). They discuss a problem in the basic design of the research in this area and highlight issues related to valid dependent variable selection. It is therefore important for researchers of the training process to re-examine what they are measuring, how they will measure it and to what they are comparing it. There is, they state, a lack of agreement on what skills are important and what variables of therapy training should be researched (Albert & Edelstein, 1990).

Hill and Lent (2006) carried out a meta-analytic review of helping skills training and found that the implementation of helping skills training, at least in some training programs, does in fact lead to some improvement in skills. However, they also discuss methodological challenges and ambiguity in terms of defining the criteria for examination. They point out that psychotherapy is unlike other career performance contexts because the outcomes of helping training and subsequent training performance may not be captured sufficiently with a single consensually accepted measure. They cite the need for some form of
evaluation tool, and suggest the use of multidimensional assessments of training growth and performance. They also point out that despite the fact that helping skills training is relatively common as the first step in therapist training, research into its efficacy, whilst prominent in the 1960s and 1970s, has diminished with the focus of the research having moved towards supervision, particularly in the field of counselling psychology. They discuss a fundamental inconsistency in that most helping skills training programs are based on a model devised by Rogers in 1942, who later came to the conclusion that the idea of skills training was not appropriate. He came to believe, based on his later experience and research, that the efficacy of successful psychotherapy was based on the implicit communication of facilitative attitudes rather than the employment of a manualised skill-set, and that therapists should be chosen for their attitudes, beliefs and personalities rather than be trained (Hill & Lent, 2006).

Boswell and Castonguay (2007) discuss what they refer to as the unfortunate paucity of empirical knowledge with regard to psychotherapy training, considering the depth and breadth of empirical evidence on the process and outcome of psychotherapy itself. They argue that the scientist-practitioner model need not only guide our practice but also the way our field approaches training. They propose that a successful training program should adhere to a coherent structure as well as an emphasis on specific components and a fostering of certain skills. Despite this, they go on to state that the impact of these elements on the competency of a psychotherapy trainee and ultimately on the clients they treat is unclear. They write about the importance of structuring training programs into phases or stages, and the stages they propose are: preparation, exploration, identification, consolidation and integration. This would involve the trainee initially learning about therapy in a broad sense before identifying particularly with one school of thought, after which their thinking would expand to a broader, more integrative perspective. They propose that a unifying principle in the trainee’s journey towards integration would be a focus on change principles. This however might prove problematic if the therapeutic principles with which the trainee initially identified, and perhaps continued to relate to, were those affiliated with a school of thought that fundamentally
opposed the utility, or even necessity, of change. They recommend some specific components of an effective training program. They advocate exposure to classical works in psychotherapy such as Freud, Rogers and Bandura, knowledge of basic and applied research, experiential forms of training rather than a purely didactic focus, self-reflection and an emphasis on multicultural competence. What is also explored is the question of whether or not a formal training structure or framework can actually enhance the acquisition of therapeutic skills at all, as well as recommendations for both experiential as well as didactic models for the acquisition of skills. The nature of integrative training is also explored, and whether it is most advantageous to initiate trainees into one model before expanding towards integration, or to structure training from an integrative perspective from the outset. This is a consistent theme in the literature on integrative training and a significant question that needs to be further researched. They put forward an explanation for the paucity of research being the complexity involved in the investigation of such an ambiguous topic. Problems, they say, exist with both the definition of the phenomenon under investigation, as well as difficulties inherent to methodological choice (Boswell & Castonguay, 2007). My personal viewpoint on how trainees should be exposed to the concept of integration fluctuated throughout my training, however, I come to a more definitive opinion as a result of undertaking this research, which is presented later, in the discussion section.

Binder, Strupp, Bongar, Lee, Messer and Peake (1993) pooled their knowledge to put forward recommendations for improving psychotherapy training based on their experiences with manual-guided training and research. They recommend that teaching involve the formulation of a precise case conceptualisation that is grounded in the client's interpersonal experience. They also point out that training is usually more successful at educating psychologists in what type of therapeutic interventions are appropriate within different models, rather than in training the substance of the actual delivery of the intervention. During clinical training, more emphasis, they assert, should be placed on teaching and developing basic relationship skills (Binder, Strupp, Bongar, Lee, Messer and Peake, 1993). In order for such learning to take place it is important to facilitate personal, experiential development to turn out therapists who can competently
create a therapeutic relationship which can assist in therapeutic change. In the literatures on therapist training, the question continually presents itself - if we are to facilitate in depth, experiential learning within novice therapists, how can we also monitor that development? Can we construct rules and regulations for experiential learning? Or must that type of training be explicitly trusting of the trainee’s ability to arrive at a meaningful philosophical destination, having taken a journey of personal development?

Even those who emphasise the importance of formalised helping skills training tell us that we must not overlook the personal development of the therapist. Hill, Stahl and Roffman (2007) put forward a rationale for providing helping skills training to novice trainees. They argue that training in specific helping skills will lead to developing therapists with more competence and confidence than with students who learn through trial and error. They also however talk about focusing first on the trainee, and then, later, on the training. They argue the value of training being a process of honing the natural helping skills of the trainees. In this, as in much of the literature, I feel that concepts like 'natural helping skills' and 'personal maturity' are paid lip-service and are not fully explored or operationalised. It seems as if many researchers and theorists are happy to enthuse over these concepts on a superficial level, but give little attention to how they might be cultivated in a person, apparently expecting that they might serendipitously and spontaneously surface in a trainees personality.

What all of the research into general therapist training appears to demonstrate is ambiguity. Ambiguity in the definition of what should constitute therapist training as well as in the deciding of how it can be researched. This ambiguity clearly stems from the lack of agreement on what psychotherapy actually is. We must ask - how can we agree on training in psychotherapy when we can't agree on what psychotherapy is? If we as therapists and therapist trainers are going to continue to operate from within a pre-paradigmatic state then how can we construct training programs that produce graduates competent in an as of yet undefinable practice? If definition of the phenomena is necessary, should training, perhaps especially doctoral level training, involve definition by the student rather than the teacher? Is a primary role of the learner to define what
they are learning? Should therapy training involve not only feedback from trainees on what they think works, but also feedback from trainees on feedback from their clients on what works?

**Stages of development**

Something that I feel also requires discussion is the way in which a trainee moves from being a novice therapist to becoming a fully competent and confident practitioner. Hill, Sullivan, Knox and Schlosser (2007), review some of the research on the stages of development of trainee therapists. They refer to the beginning stage, which Fleming (1953) claims involves the trainee imitating the supervisor, while the supervisor teaches and demonstrates. Hogan (1964) argues that this is a level that is characterised by neurotic insecurity and dependence, with trainees displaying little insight, but high levels of motivation. Loganbill, Hardy and Delworth (1982), reiterate the idea of trainees lacking self-awareness and self-confidence and are either highly dependent on supervision or not dependent enough. Grater (1985), in contrast, suggests a particular intensity with which novice therapists acquire skills as a means of managing trainee anxiety. Hess (1987) theorised the main activities of novice trainees as being role induction, demystification of psychotherapy, skill definition and the setting of boundaries. Skovholt and Ronnestad (1992) integrated these theories with their own research discussing a pre-training stage involving naturally occurring helping skills, such as giving advice and direct problem solving techniques. They discuss the anxiety that occurs when trainees discover that these lay helping skills are not necessarily sufficient. Empirical research into the experience of trainees (Williams, Judge, Hill & Hoffman, 1997) found that trainees were concerned with therapeutic skill, performance, trainee anxiety, self-efficacy and means of relating to clients. Trainees developed self-management strategies for overcoming these anxieties, such as positive self-talk and focussing on the client. Some researchers focused on critical incidents and significant learning moments for trainees (Furr & Carroll, 2003; Howard, Inman & Altman, 2006; Lee, Eppler, Kendell & Latty 2001). Issues that arose were self-efficacy and self-awareness as psychotherapists, feelings of similarity and difference to clients, self-criticalness of performance in sessions, taking on
the role of psychotherapist, difficulties in relating to unexpected clients and the helpful nature of supervision and self-reflection. Research which focused on trainees experience in supervision (Heppner & Roehlke, 1984) found support, self-awareness and skills training were described as most beneficial. In a study on critical incidents in supervision (Rabinowitz, Heppner & Roehlke, 1986) trainees noted supervisory support, treatment planning, advice and direction as the most useful factors. Hill, Sullivan, Knox & Schlosser (2007) call for research into training and supervision which extends beyond critical incidents as well as research into how trainees cope with anxiety. Hill et al., (2007) analysed the text of weekly journal entries kept by first semester trainees on counselling psychology doctoral training. Using a qualitative analysis of trainees journals, they found the emerging themes to be 'feelings about self in role of therapist', 'awareness of reactions to clients', 'learning and using helping skills', 'reactions to supervision' and 'experience that fostered growth' (Hill, Sullivan, Knox & Schlosser, 2007).

**Supervision**

While evidence on training therapists in the acquisition of therapy skills is largely inconclusive, "close supervision of the novice therapist has been found to be generally desirable" (Mowrer, 1950 p. 274). Research has shown that therapists rate receiving clinical supervision as the second most important activity for professional growth (Ronnestad & Orlinsky, 2000). Some go so far as to say that "the neophyte therapist should spend two hours with his supervisor for every hour he spends with a patient" (Mowrer, 1950 p. 276).

Jacobson and Tanggaard (2009) carried out a phenomenological study that was conducted as a series of semistructured qualitative research interviews which focused on what constitutes good and bad psychotherapy supervision. They found that novice therapists prefer supervision to involve advice and specific instruction on how to carry out psychotherapy, with some theoretical discussion, held in a supportive and affirmative structure. They also found that supervision which is specifically tailored to the individual trainee creates the most optimal
learning experience, and that trainees and even seasoned therapists will consider different things to constitute effective supervision at different points in their career.

Ronnestad and Skovholt (1993) state novice therapists to prefer a high degree of structure and instruction and a markedly asymmetrical, authoritarian relationship with their supervisor. Nielsion, (2000) tells us that trainees seek positive and critical feedback with an excessive concern with their practice being sufficient. They also found that novice therapists prefer to engage in an intellectual or cognitive form of supervision rather than a dynamic or exploratory relationship with their supervisor which looks at personal, emotional and relational elements of supervision. As therapists become more seasoned, a move takes place towards a desire to work on transference and countertransference issues and on personal strengths and weaknesses (Nielsion, 2000).

Truax, Carkhuff & Douds (1964), describe a view of supervision which could potentially integrate the didactic form of supervision with the experiential, adhering to the idea that training in psychotherapy is a therapeutic process involving learning that comes from a particular kind of relationship which leads to self-exploration. They discuss the important elements of therapeutic work not the being the implementation of specific techniques or the adoption of a particular theory but rather the constructing of therapeutic relationships which are dependent on the therapists’ attitudes and the way therapists perceive themselves. They claim that supervision should facilitate this kind of self-exploration by integrating the didactic with the experiential. Hurst and Jensen (1968) reiterate the importance of this, due to the fact that therapist training programs, while citing the need for the cultivation of helping attitudes over the requirement for specific skills training, do not incorporate sufficient facilities for the self-exploration and personal development necessary to cultivate them.

The findings in the literature on supervision generally tends to cluster around the idea that supervision has utility in the training process for the same reasons
that other elements of training have been found to be beneficial - namely because of its ability to be individually tailored to the needs of the specific trainee. It is when supervision can facilitate in depth self-exploration that it has been found useful. Therefore, literature on self-exploration and personal development will now be discussed.

**Personal development and personal therapy**

Counselling psychology differs from other areas of applied professional psychology in a number of ways (BPS, 2013). Arguably the most defining difference is its focus on the relationship in the therapeutic encounter, the therapist's use of self and the personal development of the trainee. McConnaughey (1987) says that the nature of the therapists approach to the client is determined by who the therapist is as a person. He claims that regardless of particular therapeutic relationships, clients, techniques and the setting a therapist works in, it is the character and interpersonal style of the therapist that determines the nature of the therapy that is offered. He tells us that it is important to understand the unique personality of the therapist because therapists select techniques based on who they are as a person and that therapists choosing techniques that are in-congruent with their personality will ultimately be less effective. He claims that the more a therapist accepts and values themselves, the more effective they can be at helping clients come to know and appreciate themselves. He writes of his own experience leading to this conclusion and his realisation that he could not be like his supervisors or like the master clinicians he observed practising and that his best practice would be that which is consistent with who he is as a person. He discusses how even the most distinguished theories in psychotherapy originated from the subjective attitudes and idiosyncratic characteristics of the theorists who constructed them. He uses the examples of Freud's personal issues with his mother to create the Oedipus complex and Jung's idea of the collective unconscious coming from his own concerns about isolation and self-dissolution. McConnaughey (1987) goes on to say that "theories of personality emanate from life experience; theories of therapy arise from clinical experience" (McConnaughey, 1987, p. 304).
Silverman (1985) writes about counter-transference and the perfectly analysed analyst being a myth. He argues that training in analysis does not completely immunise psychoanalysts against counter-transferential reactions that may impede analytic progress. He recommends self-analysis for all trainee analysts in order to understand and overcome counter-transferential reactions that are not useful. Therapists, he says, must aspire to be able to enter into an ego-less state in order to fully experience with the client the emotions that are being felt, and that this requires a solidly structured sense of self.

In his book, entitled *Listening with the Third Ear*, Reik (1948) discusses how therapists intuitively utilise their own unconscious to detect and decipher the unconscious desires and unconscious conflicts within their clients. He writes about the importance of therapists engaging in personal therapy in order for them to firmly establish a solid sense of self which can withstand the tacit workings that take place within the unconscious in reaction to what clients present with. For Reik, psychotherapy is a fully experiential process which resists attempts to be systematised. He advocates the idea of the psychological moment, when a therapist uses tact and timing to allow the correct intervention to emanate from their unconscious. This idea deeply resonates with me although I am once more left wondering how it is that a training program can facilitate the learning, or cultivate the growth, of this particular skill. Garfield and Bergin (1971) found that therapists lowest in emotional disturbance were more effective in decreasing depression and defensiveness in their clients than were more emotionally disturbed therapists. Anchor (1977) examines personality integration of therapists and it's link to successful therapeutic outcomes. He found that therapists who were 'in touch with themselves and with their world' and had what he called 'open communication channels within themselves' and 'an effective network of internal communication' were more successful therapists. Rawn (1991) strongly asserts the necessity of training analysis. He claims that a thorough, in-depth analysis is necessary not only for trainee analysts but also for trainee psychologists. He claims that the therapeutic aim should be the same for trainees as it is for any other clients presenting for therapy and that the single most significant cause of failure in the conducting of
psychotherapy is an insufficient thoroughness in the practitioners own personal therapy.

Garfield and Kurtz (1976) found that in a sample of 855 clinical psychologists, 63% had undergone personal therapy, despite the fact that it is not a mandatory part of their training. A small majority of all of the respondents rated psychotherapy as being important for psychologists to undergo, and would recommend it to others. When responses were dichotomised in terms of how respondents had answered in terms of whether they had undergone psychotherapy, it was found that 65% of those who had had psychotherapy recommended it for all psychologists, whereas of those who had not themselves had personal therapy, only 10.5% recommended it and felt it was important. Findings also indicated that those who defined their theoretical orientation to be related to learning theory, rated the importance of personal therapy as being significantly lower than those from a psychodynamic orientation. A similar outcome was found in those who defined themselves as Rogerian, humanistic or existential, who also valued the importance higher than those who were of a learning theory orientation. Therefore, while the data on the importance of personal therapy for psychologists is not definitive, it is rated as unimportant by those who have not had the experience of undergoing therapy, or where the need for it is not philosophically consistent with the theoretical orientation with which they identify.

Norcross, Strausser-Kirtland and Missar (1988), also found that the majority of psychotherapists have undergone personal therapy and have largely done so on an elective basis. They found that females were more likely than males to seek treatment and that insight-oriented therapists were more likely to choose personal therapy. Two or three discrete treatment episodes were usual and positive results were reported by those who sought therapy with notable changes in behaviour, cognitions and emotions as well as a reporting of important therapeutic learning. Overall, 90% of respondents reported moderate or significant improvements in anxiety, depression and marital conflict, which have been found to be the most common presenting issues for therapists seeking therapy. The enduring therapeutic learning gained by respondents was
around the importance of the therapeutic relationship and of the necessity of cultivating interpersonal skills. Peebles (1980) found that undergoing personal therapy was positively associated with the clinician’s ability to communicate empathy, warmth and genuineness. A study by Wogan and Norcross (1985) had similar findings, stating that personal therapy led to an increase in awareness of the importance of the therapeutic relationship. If therapeutic skills are reportedly so difficult to improve through training, yet personal therapy and other forms of personal development have been demonstrated to improve therapist performance, one must wonder why so many therapy training programmes, such as the clinical psychology training route, places no explicit emphasis on these training variables.

In contrast to some of these findings, Fauth and Williams (2005), examined whether therapist trainees self-awareness was helpful or a hindrance, as previous research (Nutt-Williams & Hill, 1996) had found that when trainees increased their level of in session self-awareness, they became more aware of negative self-talk, perceived themselves as less helpful and rated their clients reactions as more negative. This was disputed by the findings of Fauth and Williams (2005) however, as trainees rated experiencing increased levels of self-awareness as being helpful rather than hindering, as well as facilitating them to be more interpersonally engaged and present in the session. They did however discuss the possibility that a certain level of self-awareness within the session might be helpful, however when self-awareness reaches a higher level it may function to be overly distracting and counter-productive. If this is the case and a moderate amount of self-awareness that exists between two extremes is most beneficial, then how do we define something as ambiguous as the optimal level of self-awareness? Must we encourage trainees to be reflective to a certain extent but to be aware that there is such thing as ‘too much of a good thing’? If so, how can trainers assist trainees in finding their own cut off point?

The benefits of psychotherapy for trainees has been demonstrated by other research (Taubner, Zimmerman, Kachele, Moller & Sell, 2013) which looked at levels of self-efficacy and introject affiliation as measures of outcome. What they found was that the self-efficacy reports of trainee therapists as well as their
introject affiliation (the way they related to and treated themselves) increased over time as a function of satisfaction with therapy. They assert that trainees' personal therapy, when rated as effective, has a positive causal effect on levels of introject affiliation, which leads to higher levels of self efficacy, which in turn leads to increased success rates in the therapy practised by the trainee. Here, Taubner, Zimmerman, Kachele, Moller and Sell, (2013) provide us with a specific process through which personal therapy makes trainees better therapists.

Cognitive therapy and CBT are dominant paradigms within current psychotherapy, but unlike other approaches, do not necessarily advocate the necessity of personal therapy and personal development in order to become a competent practitioner. Coming from the perspective that psychotherapy is based on the process of identifying a problem objectively before utilising the specific, appropriate solution, overlooking the personal development of the provider of the solution is philosophically consistent. Bennett-Levy, Turner, Beaty, Smith, Paterson & Farmer (2001), carried out a qualitative study of the experience of trainees engaging in the self-practice of cognitive therapy techniques and self-reflection. Participants reported an enhancement of therapeutic understanding which they considered to be both professionally and personally useful. They reported a 'deeper sense of knowing' and a greater understanding of themselves and the perception of cognitive therapy as a useful tool for personal change. Interestingly, there was also an enhancement of trainee self-concept which, although a specific issue that cognitive therapy interventions can work with if the particular diagnosis calls for it, is not necessarily something that CBT must engage with to be considered successful. The literature appears to demonstrate that personal development in the form of personal psychotherapy for trainee's has a demonstrated efficacy across approaches and training programs.

**Training in integrative psychotherapy**

Training in integrative psychotherapy differs from the process of being trained in
a more 'pure-form' approach in that trainees are presented with numerous models of therapy which have an equivalency of outcome. Trainees are, Norcross and Beutler (2000), tell us, "confronted with an awesome diversity of theoretical orientations each represented by articulate and adamant advocates and equally articulate and adamant detractors" (Norcross & Beutler, 2000, p.247). They inform us that the “confusion of ideas and admonitions, do's and don'ts, is likely to dampen the enthusiasm of all but the most resilient students” (Norcross & Beutler, 2000, p.248). They claim that the training process must be consistent with the openness of psychotherapy integration itself. Consoli and Jester (2005) say that despite the fact that the field of integrative psychotherapy has matured, the training has not. Norcross and Kaplan, (1995) found that very few institutions use an integrative training model. The question which seems to continue to present itself in terms of integrative training, is whether novice therapists should first be trained in a specific approach and integrate later, or should training in integrative therapy be integrative from the outset? Consoli and Jester (2005) argue that integration should be the learning goal from the beginning, whereas Castonguay (2005) disagrees. He argues that integrative training early on can potentially lead trainees to learn about theories superficially, rather than exploring the philosophies of specific approaches in depth (Castonguay, 2005). He speaks about the tenacity required to pursue knowledge that may never be known, saying that the integration movement should be guided by Andre Gide who urges us to only believe those who are seeking the truth, and to doubt those who find it (Castonguay, 2005). Robertson (1986) talks about the fact that clinicians often become eclectic in practice but not in theory, as a result of pragmatic considerations that arise through years of practice. He pointed out that most trainers, on some level, base the way they train on the way they themselves were trained and he states this to be problematic for integrative training because most teachers were trained in one, pure-form approach. Castonguay (2000) argues that the lack of a structured, systematic training procedure for integrative therapists contributes to a reputation of integrative psychotherapy as being wishy-washy and poorly defined.

Norcross and Beutler (2000) put forward a prescriptive eclectic approach to
psychotherapy training. They emphasise matching the therapy to the client's problem and a focus on evidence of effectiveness, rather than an over-reliance on theory. They outline what they call ten core principles for psychotherapist development. These are, the need to demonstrate and model therapy, sufficient and diverse experience of practising, a well coordinated training process, the imparting of technical and interpersonal skills, monitoring and establishing competence, accounting for the individual differences and experiences of trainees, the importance of students having therapeutic experiences such as personal therapy, incorporating technological advances into training, cultivating respect for the empirical literature and the evaluation of training outcomes. They state the goal of training to be a change that may be more pluralistic and liberating in content but not in process and for therapists to behave integratively and openly, while not losing their ability to think critically. What they ask for is a systematic and structured framework to educate people in something which is not always structured or systematic itself. While it would seem that this would go a long way towards solving problems around trainee anxiety potentially caused by a lack of structure, for those who argue that the training process should experientially mirror the process of therapy itself, this model might fall short.

Robertson (1971) describes an approach to training that is what he calls "naturalistic" and says that "training should begin with the experiences evoked by the subject matter rather than by a formal scheme" (Robertson 1971, p. 246). He claims this method to have the benefits of not requiring trainees to 'unlearn'. He opposes the concept of teaching techniques in any way and claims the important part of psychotherapy training to be facilitating the trainee to get in touch with the things that they don't know that they already know about helping people from life experiences. He believes that training should be guided by principles not techniques, and that reading the works of the masters such as Freud and Rogers is not as important as undergoing a similar process as they did in order to develop one's own theory of practice. I personally feel drawn to the idea of prioritising principles over techniques and that in-depth and thorough psychotherapy training, by its very nature must tap into something that is fundamental to the human experience of relating, as Robertson argues. I am
inclined to agree that knowledge of therapy is something that we learn more from looking inward and through self discovery and indeed comes from knowledge that is tacit and experiential rather than cognitive and external.

Wolfe (2000) discusses the difficulty of constructing an integrative training program due to the fact that no adequate integrative theory of psychotherapy exists. Because of the complexity of diagnosing symptoms and the difficulty in making choices about what specific manifestation of the issue to work with and when, he advocates the need for underlying theoretical frameworks on the process of change and a theory of personality. He hypothesises that all therapy is a "struggle with painful information about the self" (Wolfe, 2000 p.236) and that from this focal point, one can build a theory which encompasses the affective, cognitive and behavioural propensities of human beings. He states that self-knowledge is stored as emotionally charged beliefs or images that are arranged in a hierarchy. He asserts that we are unaware of the ideas about the self that are affecting us and that psychotherapy is essentially about becoming aware of this. He elaborates, that facing the realities of the outside world becomes more tolerable when this internal work has been done. He discusses how his theory of psychotherapy ties together the Rogerian, the psycho-dynamic and the cognitive behavioural schools of thought and how this can facilitate a theoretically integrative training program. He states that this theoretical belief is present within him as a trainer and is therefore present in the way he conducts training. He lays out a model of integrative training not dissimilar to other models in terms of its syllabus, which classes trainees are required to take and what proficiencies they need to evidence. However, his idea is that all learning would be underpinned by a theoretically consistent philosophy and a move away from technical eclecticism, which he terms as being "a temporary accommodation [...] along the journey towards theoretically based integration (Wolfe, 2000 p. 243). I found my own journey towards integration to mirror Wolfe's in many ways, including his move away from technical eclecticism to a more theoretically oriented integrative philosophy. I also found myself relating profoundly to his writings on the self and how our unconscious self concept can affect even those things that it might seem unrelated to, as well as how this theory can bridge the gaps of integration. I
elaborate upon this in detail later in the study.

In his paper on his journey to integration as a trainee, Lampropoulos (2006) tells us that from the time of his initially engaging with integrative psychotherapy, he was aware of the need for theoretical underpinning. He writes “although I was still trying to comprehend different theoretical orientations, I knew that the essence of psychotherapy was in something called common factors” (Lampropoulos, 2006, p.6). He discusses how this idea set the stage for his initial learning, before being revisited at the end of his training, for him to fine tune. He elaborates that this emphasis he placed on the common factors while training, helped him to look at each theory in relation to others, rather than in isolation. He states the importance of self-direction in learning of this kind, in terms of integrating theoretically, as well as in personal development. Indeed in his earlier paper, (Lampropoulos, 2000), he claims that common factors can potentially rescue technical eclecticism from its reputation as being a-theoretical.

Castonguay (2000) tells us about the 'commonians', integrationists who identify the search for that which occurs in all major and successful therapies as being of paramount importance. He discusses process research, which has provided evidence for similarities among conceptually divergent orientations across many aspects of therapy. He notes the difficulties inherent in training therapists in a common factors approach, such as the large number of common factors that have been identified thus far, the difficulty in using common factors based therapy when required to develop a specific treatment plan for a specific disorder, as well as his claim that while the teaching of common factors should be essential to integrative training, it is not sufficient when taught in isolation. He asserts the necessity of teaching trainees how to identify principles of change rather than techniques for bringing it about, but tells us that effective training programs do need to incorporate other mechanisms to facilitate learning on the implementation of skills and techniques. Castonguay's (2000) ideas appear to have a lot of merit in terms of the practical application of the common factors approach. I agree with the emphasis he places on theoretical principles and how techniques can be derived from these as well as his assertion that a focus
on theory does not have to leave trainees deficient in terms of skill and technique.

Developing an integrative theory of practice

Gold (2005) informs us that any discussion of the difficulties of learning or constructing an integrative theory of practice must acknowledge the cognitive, intellectual and interpersonal challenge of becoming competent in more than one type of therapy simultaneously. He writes about the necessity to work with the emotional challenges to the student therapist in order for the process to bring about an advantageous outcome. He claims this process to be interfered with by such conflicts as heroic identification, brand loyalty and tribal affiliation. He states that while these interfere with the learning process, to some degree, they also provide an emotional buffer to the sense of anxiety that integrative therapists inevitably undergo. It must be noted that this sense of confusion and anxiety over competing theoretical orientations which have all been, on some level, shown to be equally effective, is not one that trainees learning one school of therapy have to contend with. For Gold (2005), integrative psychotherapy is a process which is, at its best, creative, engendering theoretical freedom and intellectual spontaneity that can perfectly fit the issues of therapy moment by moment. This comes from appreciating the advantages of each approach, while simultaneously remaining aware of, and dissatisfied with, the limitations of each school of thought. This, he claims, can be accomplished by adding an affectively oriented component to already proposed training models by Castonguay (2000) and Wolfe (2000). This would involve moving away from a focus on heroic worship of the teacher, supervisor or theorist and would emphasise a trust in the ability of the student to construct his or her own theory of practice. Here Gold (2005) builds on the work of Castonguay (2000) and Wolfe (2000) and their focus on 'the person of the therapist' in way that I believe could create a meaningful and potentially useful training guideline. He describes in a coherent manner the moving away from tribal affiliation towards creativity and theoretical freedom which I identify strongly with. In my training, particularly at the beginning, I used Rogerian idea’s not only as a base from which to integrate, but also as protection from trainee anxiety.
Herron (1978) writes about the therapist's choice of theory, asserting that the relationship between a therapist's personality and their development of a theory of practice requires research. He discusses various determinants of a trainee's eventual theory of practice, the first of which seems to be coincidence. He discusses the fact that novice therapists obviously identify with theories to which they have been initially exposed. The models that are taught on specific training programs will undoubtedly influence the trainee, as well as the order in which they are taught. However, practice in training also influences theoretical orientation, he claims. If an approach that appeared attractive to a trainee on a theoretical level fails to function well for them in practice, they will need to continue to explore the theoretical possibilities. Alternatively, he states, a trainee might find one method successful in application, but boring and not intellectually stimulating enough to maintain their interest. He explores the very personal nature of choosing a theory of practice and that there must be a marriage between the needs of the client and the needs of the therapist. The subjective nature of making this choice cannot be overlooked, he tells us, and states that trainee's tend to choose the truth that they like the most over the “truest truth” (Herron, 1978, p. 398), but that the feelings that they have towards that truth may fluctuate over time and will invariably involve revisions to this truth. The onus, he says, is on the theory to maintain the interest of the psychotherapist.

Herron (1978) details his own theoretical orientation and how it has been influenced by various factors. He tells us that he found rational-emotive theory to fall below his interest level, that he was moved by the writings of Carl Rogers and that during his doctoral training he described himself as psycho-dynamic without having much formal training in the practice of it and limited theoretical knowledge of psychoanalysis. He talks about his personal need for a theory that offers space for his rebellious, challenging and unorthodox nature, without it leading to irresponsible expressiveness. He also states a key factor in researching therapists personalities in relation to their choice of theory to be the need to delineate whether some of the various competing approaches to psychotherapy are perhaps differing applications of techniques which share almost identical theories, and that until the various theories of psychotherapy have been usefully operationalised and specified, researching the way a person responds to them will prove difficult.
Journaling for personal and professional development

As discussed throughout this chapter, personal development is a key aspect of therapist training and has been shown to have advantageous outcomes when implemented in the training process. Keeping a reflective journal has long been heralded as an appropriate method of working through psychological issues within therapy and as a means of making sense of one’s internal world (Ulrich & Lutgendorf, 2002). Journaling is often used in counselling training to help students process experiences and become more self-reflective (Howatt, 1999; Naviaux, 1980; Progoff, 1977; Tsang, 2003; Wagoner & Wijekumer, 2004) and has been used in previous studies on the experience of novice psychotherapists. As well as a tool for personal development, however, journal keeping has been implemented as a means of reflecting on professional development, to strengthen and consolidate academic and practical learning.

It has been argued that personal and professional development are so connected that attempting to disentangle them would be a wholly pointless exercise (Wilkins, 1997). It has been put forward that, in terms of therapy training, personal development and professional development are one and the same, as it has been consistently demonstrated in the research that it is the personal qualities of the therapist that makes therapy effective (McLeod, 2010). Journaling has been suggested to be of some utility in facilitating the process of professional development in becoming an integrative therapist, as the development of a theory of practice is such an integral part of training.

Etherington (2001) discusses a theoretical consistency that exists within the use of reflective journaling in the personal and professional development of therapists. She writes about the fact that it is a community for whom such concepts are not unusual, and speaks of the utility she found in the process, for becoming more aware of, and integrating, several parts of herself. She described the process as having helped her notice "parts of herself that [she] gathered up together" (Etherington, 2001). Daniels and Feltham (2004) carried
Jasper says that “reflective writing has become established as a key component of reflective practice, and central to the notion of learning from experience.” (Jasper, 2005 p.247). She discusses reflective journaling and its utility in the construction of a theory of practice (Jasper, 2005). She states the benefits of journaling in terms of reflecting on practice, analysing both clinical work and thinking critically about theory, as well as its use in facilitating the connection of disparate ideas. She talks of a meta process, in which reflective writing can be seen as, not only a way to learn about integrating theories, but also to learn about the learning process. Despite the fact that it is widely used in psychotherapy training for both personal and professional development, journaling remains under researched (Wheeler, 2002). The current study aims to address this deficit and the research into this area will now be looked at.

Schon argues in favour of reflective writing for all professions, in ‘The Reflective Practitioner’ that there are three components to professional knowledge – “an underlying discipline or basic science component upon which the practice rests or from which it is developed, an applied science or engineering component from which many of the day-to-day diagnostic procedures and problems solving methods are derived and a skills and attitudinal component that concerns the actual performance of services to the client, using the underlying basic and applied knowledge” (Schon, 1983, p. 24). He states that “the application of basic science yields applied science” (Schon, 1983, p. 24), but questions how basic science becomes applied science. He uses the example of the medical sciences with its auxiliary scientific fields having developed an immense body of knowledge with which to cure human diseases, but that it's auxiliary knowledge needs to be applied in a clinical setting to have practical utility.

Schon makes reference to the tacit dimension of knowing, claiming that competent practitioners usually know more than they can verbalise (Schon, 1983). He writes about the need for an ‘art of practice’, which he suggests cannot be taught through traditional teaching methods, and that it would only be
able to be taught if the knowledge being imparted were constant and known, but
that this is not the case. He argues that the problems that will need to be solved
by the professionals are heretofore unknown and so it is not sufficient to teach
professionals what to do but to educate them in a superordinate form of
problem-solving which can be broadly applied. Problems, he argues, in real
world practice, do not present themselves to the practitioner as transparently as
'technical rationality' states. Problems faced on a day-to-day basis by
professionals are, he submits, more complex and ambiguous.

Learning to be reflective can serve to correct the 'overlearning' that can occur
within professional training, Schon claims. Through reflection, the practitioner
can become aware of the tacit understandings that have been created around
the repetitive experiences of specialised practice. In this way, the tacit learning
can be critiqued and the professional can come to make new sense of unique,
uncertain situations with which he will be inevitably faced. Schon discusses the
importance of reflective practice, proposing that the articulating of feelings
around the problem can be enough to help construct an entirely new theory of
the phenomenon under investigation. The professional can then become a
researcher of his own practice and formulate new, tentative, experiments
around ways to solve unique problems. The situation then "talks back, the
practitioner listens, and as he appreciates what he hears, he reframes the
situation once again" (Schon, 1983, p.131–132). Reflective experimentation, he
states, is the "probing, playful activity which we get a feel for things" (Schon,

Schon promotes the need for a movement within the professional field, away
from the ideas of 'technique', towards those of 'intuition' more in line with the art
world. 'Art' here is defined as intuitive judgement and skill, the feeling for
phenomena and for action, or 'knowing-in-practice'. Schon also defines it as a
practitioners reflection, "within the context of action, on phenomena which he
perceives as incongruent with his intuitive understandings" (Schon, 1983, p.
241). While many professionals reflect-in-action, they do not reflect upon their
reflections and therefore find it difficult to train others in this skill. Therefore the definition of reflection cannot be ambiguous and under-researched. Schon warns that when we begin to reflect-in-action, we may trigger an infinite regress of reflection on action, then on our own reflection on action and so on ad infinitum. He informs us that "the stance appropriate to reflection is incompatible with the stance appropriate to action" (Schon, 1983, p. 278). It appears that reflection is important, but that for it to be of utility within the professions, it must be used in concert with applied professional practice. He states that "a practitioner who reflects-in-action tends to question the definition of his task, the theories-in-action that he brings to it, and the measures of performance by which he is controlled. And as he questions these things, he also questions elements of the organisational knowledge structure in which his functions are embedded". (Schon, 1983, p. 337)

Rochlen, Zack and Speyer (2004) approach reflective writing from the perspective of online email therapy. They looked at the advantages of therapy that takes place in the written form and the unique benefits of reflective writing that manifest in email therapy. Indeed they state that "some online therapists report anecdotally that relating through text text-based self-disclosure can have the effect of inducing a high degree of intimacy and honesty from the first exchange of email" (Rochlen, Zack & Speyer, 2004, p. 271)

They elaborate, discussing what they refer to as the 'zone of reflection', arguing that online therapy has the potential advantage of enhancing self reflection and ownership of the therapeutic process because of the difference in the way we reflect upon that which we write over that which we say. They state that the asynchronous nature of the email exchange mediates the process of therapy by text which facilitates both writers to attend more closely to their own process while still engaging in a didactic dialogue. They hypothesise about an enhanced sense of emotional containment due to the fact that the ownership that the client takes of the process, through writing, allows them to set the pace, tone, volume and parameters of self-disclosure. They discuss the potential advantages of
writing over speech, as it can allow clients to 'get to the heart of the matter' with more expediency. Although they are exploring online email therapy, one of their main points is that the very process of writing about one's problems or issues is potentially therapeutic in and of itself. They reference Pennebaker's research (1997) which empirically demonstrates the utility of writing about emotional experiences.

Pennebaker (1997) states that "written emotional expression leads to a transduction of the traumatic experience into a linguist, fixed structure that promotes assimilation and understanding of the event and reduces negative affect associated with thoughts of the event" (Pennebaker, 1997, p.175). He also found that expressive writing led to significant superior health outcomes in participants, both psychological as well as physiological, without there necessarily needing to be any marked increase in health behaviours. What Pennebaker and colleagues later study demonstrated is that the benefits of reflective writing came in the form of insight rather than catharsis and that the process aided participants with awareness and understanding of their thoughts, feelings and behaviours rather than it being beneficial in itself (Pennebaker, Colder & Sharpe, 1990). Therefore, it would seem that the utility of reflective writing occurs in a cognitive context rather than on an experiential level. Pennebaker and Chung (in press) point out that the value of reflective writing cannot be explained by a single cause or theory and that it seems to set off a cascade of effects which are ultimately beneficial. They state the benefits of reflective writing to be that it forces participants to re-evaluate their life circumstances, label and acknowledge their emotions, and translate the experiential into words. This, they argue assists people in understanding their circumstances better and thinking about and using their social worlds differently and as a result many unhealthy behaviours abate.

Expressive writing has been shown to promote sleep, enhanced immune functioning, reduced alcohol consumption, increased physician visits and has been shown to reduce episodes of illness. The research however appears to
demonstrate that the more subjective means of measuring outcome do not show similar results (Pennebaker & Chung (in press)). Therefore it would appear that while this practice can be said to have numerous benefits to the reflectors, these benefits are not necessarily overtly apparent to them. An argument can be made for the investigation of how those who engage in reflective writing experience this process themselves. If this practice has been shown to have beneficial outcomes in terms of professional practice as well as health advantages, why are these benefits not apparent in the subjective account of the writer in the same way that they are in clients of traditional psychotherapy? Therefore, the current research seeks to examine the experience of one participant’s reflective journaling process, subjectively and in great depth.

Etherington champions the use of reflective journaling in research. She makes the claim that the kind of privacy that reflective writing facilitates, allows us to explore without inhibition, aspects of ourselves that we might be reluctant to share with others (Etherington, 2004). She discusses the utility of creating a coherent narrative which helps facilitate a development of a sense of who we are while remaining uncertain and open to change. It is for this reason, she argues, that many training courses encourage counselling and psychotherapy students to use journal writing to monitor their growth, to develop their own ‘internal supervisor’ and to integrate all aspects of their learning. Because unacknowledged negative thoughts and feelings may block our ability to hear others clearly, or may influence how we make sense of what we are hearing, she states reflective writing to be useful in helping us recognise these internal processes. Writing a journal can facilitate greater awareness of our habits of thinking and to train us to attend to our senses, visual, auditory and that which we what we sense in our bodies (Etherington, 2004). She references Irving Yalom’s noteworthy example of reflexivity in psychotherapy (Yalom & Elkin, 1974). Yalom invited his client, who was a writer experiencing writer’s block, to keep a journal of their sessions together while he did the same, before they exchanged journals six months into the therapy. This resulted in qualitative evaluative data about the therapy itself, as well as a therapeutic tool which
helped the client overcome her writers block and allowed the therapy to reach a depth which might otherwise not have been achieved (Etherington, 2004).

She focuses specifically on the use of metaphor in reflective writing and how it can help us to communicate what is abstract, what we perceive or what we know, either tacitly or intuitively, but for which we have no direct translation into words. Metaphor, she states, reminds us of facts as well as feelings and felt senses that surround them, acting as a bridge between the sensory processes of the cognition and the affective, connecting us to ourselves on various levels (Etherington, 2004). It is this type of investigation, of tacit or intuitive knowledge that can be unearthed from the reflective process, that the current research seeks to engage in.

An examination of masters students' perceptions of keeping a reflective journal during psychotherapy training was carried out by Wright (2006). She discusses reflective journaling as being a significant part of the development of reflective practitioners, and highlights questions that arise around how well it is facilitated and assessed. It seems that, considering its ubiquity within therapist training, a means of assessing it that is both structured and consistent across programs, is lacking. Students were interviewed about the process of keeping a reflective journal, which was assessed academically, and it was found that how well the journal was assessed affected the way in which students evaluated the process. It was also found that evaluation by supervisors resulted in the suppression of the 'artistry' that such a practice has the potential to cultivate. This echoes Moon's (1999) findings around the contradictory styles of working in counselling and psychotherapy and the difficulty for students in alternating between academic and expressive styles of writing. It is clear that methods of evaluating this form of learning, as well as a manner of integrating this style of learning into an academic context, are necessary.

Fitzpatrick, Kovalak and Weaver (2010) explored how trainees develop an initial theory of practice, using grounded theory to analyse the reflective journals of 17
masters level trainee counsellors. They found that personal, professional and cultural factors contributed to this development and that theories which directly contradicted specific values of the trainee and their family or cultural background were often rejected. It was found that analysing journals allowed the theory development process to be tracked as it was happening rather than relying on retrospective recall. Reactions to reading, recorded in the journals, was also found to be useful. Also discussed, was the fact that journals were being formally assessed and that this may have limited trainees desire to discuss very personal information. A noted limitation in the study was that there were only 8 entries made, over 12 weeks, and the researchers argued that this was perhaps insufficient for the investigation of a process as complex as this one. They make the recommendation that future research in this area take place on training journals which are maintained more consistently. The current research adheres to this suggestion. I found in my journaling process, that the fact that I knew that I would be including only entries that chose meant that I could freely express myself without limitation.

Hill, Sullivan, Knox and Schlosser, (2007), investigated five doctoral trainees experiences of becoming counselling psychologists, using qualitative analysis of weekly journal entries. They highlight the necessity for research on reflective writings around early client work and argue that initial training experiences provide the foundations for the subsequent formation of a theory of practice in the long-term. The current study seeks to expand on this research and document this process, in depth. Themes that emerged from Hill, Sullivan, Knox and Schlosser, (2007) were around the role of self as therapist, becoming aware of reactions to clients, learning and using helping skills, the importance of supervision and specific experiences that fostered growth. It was also found that the topics that tended to present themselves in journals were similar to those which repeatedly came up in class, and therefore it is noteworthy that the reflective process of the individual trainee, and the points of reflection which they might consider salient, may be influenced, to a substantial degree, by the philosophy of their training program. Also, although journaling proved popular with most trainees, it was not something which fit well with the personality of every student. Therefore is it questionable whether the utility with which
trainee's evaluate reflective writing might be influenced highly by their theoretical orientation and that of their program.

Shepherd (2006) discusses how he improved his professional practice by keeping a reflective journal, describing it as a way to become a researcher of one's own practice. He overall found it to be a successful means of constructing a theory of practice by fully understanding the nature of his practice. He puts forward the need to talk about our practice very honestly and to use this form of honest feedback from ourselves as well as from our clients to better ourselves as therapists. He spoke of a process he called 'double-loop reflection', where the goals, values and strategies were not just taken for granted, but were, themselves analysed. In this manner, he was able to not only learn about his own practice, but also learn about the learning itself. He spoke about self-learning leading to learning about his own practice and how making his values more explicit, a task which, interestingly, he found to be more challenging than he expected, meant that he could go about investigating if he was indeed implementing these values in practice. By putting aside his 'professional armour', and striving to deeply scrutinise his own practice, he says that he was able to become a witness to his own effectiveness. The current study engages with Sheperd's ideas of 'double-loop reflection', using heuristics to reflect on the reflecting and putting aside professional armour and to further examine how self-learning impacts development as a practitioner.

A study which has a number of similarities with the current research is that of Turner, Gibson Bennetts and Hunt (2008). They examined how trainees learn from their personal experiences as novice therapists and the impact it has on their professional development. Trainee's used themselves as their own participants utilising a heuristic methodology to analyse their own reflective journals. Their findings were mainly around the personal anxieties that trainee therapists experience. They discuss the fact that confidence and competence tends to increase with experience and that the acknowledging of the particularly stressful nature of practising as a therapist, and finding ways to manage and examine these anxieties can lead us to be more well-rounded and effective therapists. Their study did not so much focus on their development of an
integrative theory of practice, as much as the way in which they were functioning as a therapist. The current research, building on this study, moves towards an emphasis on learning that is both personal and professional and aims to explore the two somewhat separately, despite the difficulties inherent to this detachment as stated by Wilkins (1997). The anxieties of the participants in Turner et al.'s study was not focused around the difficulty of integrating theoretically dissimilar philosophies, and was not explicitly looking at the construction of a theory of practice. It is therefore noteworthy that reflexive writing for the purposes of professional development or the construction of a theory of practice and journaling for personal development (which will lead to professional development, but does not have this as the explicit goal), have been difficult to divorce from one another. This will, to some degree be attempted in the current study, in order to produce meaningful findings on the usefulness of this practice on both for these areas of training, while acknowledging that both lead into one another. To accomplish this the current study will make a distinction between my reflections on psychotherapy theory and my reflections on my process of becoming a therapist.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, training in psychotherapy, and in particular integrative psychotherapy is challenging on a fundamental level due to the subject being taught existing in a pre-paradigmatic state (Cooper and McLeod, 2011). Questions exist around the importance of skills training and at what point trainees should be encouraged to identify a theory of practice and how training programs should facilitate this. The personality and attitudes of the therapist are continuously referred to in the literature and the importance of personal development in terms of producing therapists who can facilitate effective therapeutic relationships seems to be agreed upon. How this personal development should take place is less clear, however. Reflective journaling for personal as well as professional development has been shown to be beneficial and the current study seeks to research this further. To do this, this study involves the heuristic analysis of the researcher's reflective journal, during his progression through doctoral training in counselling psychology. The research
looks explicitly at the personal and the professional development that takes place, attempting to answer the question of what the process of becoming an integrative psychologist is, and how one goes about constructing functional a theory of practice.
Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

In the literature review it was established that personal development and the process of how trainees construct a theory of practice is under researched, and the utility of reflective writing for accomplishing these goals was discussed.

The aims of the current research were to examine these topics in greater detail, using a heuristic methodology to analyse the researcher's reflective journal. In this chapter the methodology will be positioned philosophically in terms of epistemology, scientific psychology and counselling psychology in particular. The research design of heuristic inquiry is discussed, and the stages of the research are outlined. A defence of the use of this method and the utility of analysis of reflective journaling is explained. Finally, trustworthiness of heuristics and the ethical considerations of the current study are discussed.

Philosophical positioning

In this section I will discuss the philosophical underpinning of my research, and where it is positioned in terms of epistemology. I acknowledge the need for a more rigorous defence of the philosophical and ideological positioning of the current study than in a more traditional research design. I intend to defend heuristic research as a methodology from the perspective that qualitative research is an epistemological pillar of psychology and psychotherapy. Heuristics as an epistemological match for the study of psychotherapy has been argued by Etherington, (2004b) and Nuttel, (2006) and this will be further discussed within the research design section. In this section I will discuss psychology and counselling psychology, the philosophy of science and of psychology, qualitative research and phenomenology.
**Psychology and counselling psychology**

The field of psychology is unlike other areas of science, in that it does not operate from one cohesive paradigm. There are various schools of thought and no definitive explanations of the phenomena it explores. It is a discipline rife with contentious arguments and controversial disagreements. There is perhaps no area within psychology as philosophically disjointed as that of psychotherapy.

By its very definition, counselling psychology focuses on the more deeply rooted, philosophical explanations of what constitutes psychotherapy. Counselling psychology makes an explicit claim that in order to understand psychology in its current context and counselling psychology's uniquely philosophical viewpoint, it is first necessary to explore the fundamental questions of humanity as well as the philosophy of science itself (BPS, 2013).

**Epistemology and the philosophy of science**

Ontology is the philosophical study of the nature of being and existence as well as the nature of reality. It investigates what can be said to exist and the meaning of existence. The view of reality that I personally hold, and the paradigm from which this research operates, is one of constructivism. Constructivism posits that learning is a process where the learner actively constructs or creates subjective representations of reality. However some theorists believe that constructivism distinguishes experiential reality from an ontological one about which constructivism can have nothing to say and that a viewpoint such as this is concerned only with knowing and cannot argue anything about the nature of reality (Fumerton, 2006). Therefore, discussion must take place around epistemology. Epistemology is the philosophy of knowledge and knowing and what can be known. It is concerned with the distinction of what can and cannot be known. If a discussion around the nature
of research is to occur then we must, by necessity, begin by thinking about what we want to know, what we are able to know and how we can go about acquiring this knowledge. As a study which is oriented in the post-modern arena, my research acknowledges the existence of multiple, subjective truths, and so epistemology and the nature of how one can know must be discussed. I also broadly define my personal viewpoint to be of the post-modernist persuasion at this point, however this is discussed in greater detail later in the text. Within epistemology the fundamental question being asked is - 'what are the necessary and sufficient conditions for S to know p, where S is the subject and p is the proposition?' (Fumerton, 2006). There is much debate within philosophy as to how we go about acquiring knowledge and how it is that we can make any kind of claim to truth regarding this knowledge. Some thinkers tell us that we should prioritise internalism over externalism or rationalism over empiricism, or knowledge that is considered a priori over that which is a posteriori (Fumerton, 2006).

Within all of these ideological tussles exists a disagreement of the role that the knower has in what is known and a conflict between whether we come to knowledge primarily through the observation of the external world or through introspective reasoning. Descartes, the father of rationalism, believed that we gain knowledge through reason and contemplation, whilst Hobbs and Locke, the empiricist philosophers, assert it to be through observing and investigating the world around us and by means of sense-based experience (Fumerton, 2006). Traditionally, it has been the more empirical means of gathering information that has been argued to fall into the category of science.

Science has been defined as "a process consciously directed towards achieving knowledge that is explicitly formulated, general in scope, systematically organised and dependable". (Danto, 1960 p. 11). This definition does not prioritise a particular type of knowing but rather the rigour and trustworthiness with which one pursues the acquisition of knowledge. Indeed Danto (1960) informs us that "since the beginnings of science in classical Antiquity, the nature of scientific inquiry as well as of its intellectual fruits have been subjects of intimate concern to reflective men" (Danto, 1960, p. 12). This view is however
not ubiquitous. Richard Fenyman is believed to have said that “philosophy of science is about as useful to scientists as ornithology is to birds” (Danto, 1960). While such a statement might be true for the more traditional sciences, in the case of psychology it must be pointed out that the scientists studying the science and the subjects of the scientific inquiry are one and the same: the human being. Therefore it would seem that Richard Fenyman's analogy is specious, and that, in fact, birds might indeed find the knowledge of ornithology useful, were they the ones carrying out the investigation.

Science claims its validity to come from its grounding in empirical observation and induction. It espouses the idea that we can make somewhat informed predictions about happenings in the future, based on observing events from the past. This is true of the philosophy of psychology as a science both in the qualitative and quantitative arms of its methods of research.

The philosophy of scientific psychology

The philosophy of psychology generally refers to issues around the theoretical foundations of modern psychology, particularly the epistemological concerns about the methodology of psychological investigation (Richards, 2010). Wilhelm Wundt, who is considered to be the father of experimental psychology, was the first to actively position psychology within the field of the sciences. Wundt is largely remembered as the man who established psychology as a modern academic discipline, pioneering physiological experiments in his laboratory in Leipzig. It should be noted however that from the beginning of these experimental endeavours he championed introspection as a means of gaining knowledge (Richards, 2010). It must therefore be acknowledged that from its beginnings as an experimental science, psychology has always placed importance upon the introspection of the researcher. It was only as experimentation continued to develop and evolve within the discipline that research was considered to be able to take place independent of the influence of the researcher and the focus on reflexivity was withdrawn. As psychological research developed, a division arose between the qualitative and the
Qualitative research

The current study is a heuristic inquiry and is therefore positioned within the qualitative discipline. It has been claimed that “we are living through a pioneering period of qualitative methodology” (Giorgi, 1994, p.190). Qualitative methodologies have been defined as those in which the research informs the theory rather than the theory informing the research. Breakwell et al. (2000) inform us that some researchers self-consciously and purposefully avoid the construction of theory for philosophical reasons. They make a distinction between the fundamental goals of qualitative psychology. Qualitative research is therefore used to “describe in detail specific happenings without any attempt to use these as instances to illustrate or test some general explanatory framework” (Breakwell et al., 2000). They argue against psychological research always attempting to “theory-test” as a means of adhering to a philosophy based on induction. This can be defended by the fact that we can never definitively predict the manner in which a phenomenon will occur every time, or indeed predict its occurrence at all. We can merely take an educated guess based on our past experiences. This is what is referred to in philosophy as ‘the problem of induction’ (Fumerton, 2006). Hume (1888) and Popper (1934) discuss this problem, saying that the continued occurrence of a phenomenon leads us to believe that the phenomenon will continue to occur, however just one instance of the phenomenon failing to occur disproves the idea of the phenomenon’s continued occurrence in the future.

In his paper entitled 'A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research', Mahoney argues the two research traditions to be distinct cultures marked by different values, beliefs and norms (Mahoney, 2006). These differences must be acknowledged and understood in order for successful research to be carried out in either sphere. In discussing qualitative research, Maykut and Morehouse (1994) state a philosophical orientation to inquiry to be imperative in order to form a distinct, well informed frame of reference to
function as a foundational platform on which to construct research methodology (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). They assert the necessity of acquainting oneself with the research method on an in-depth, philosophical level, so as to have a general road map from which to work, and a specific destination in mind. It is more important for the researcher to be aware of the ideas that underlie the research rather than working from a specific set of rules and guidelines in order to produce rigorous and trustworthy research. In this way, it becomes easier to correct the inevitable shifts off course that are inherent to any research process. This is not intended to be a way of letting qualitative researchers 'off the hook' in terms of methodological cogency, however. Giorgi (1994) argues that "theoretical consistency and methodical consistency ought at least be respected even if not always rigidly pursued in the beginning", (Giorgi, 1994, p.191). He claims the need for this level of rigour to be necessary in this pioneering time of qualitative research so as to enhance its legitimation and acceptance within the wider field (Giorgi, 1994). Therefore it must be understood that the current research asserts that methodological rigour is of paramount importance, but comes from being deeply acquainted with the research method on a philosophical and experiential level, not by unwaveringly adhering to manualised guidelines.

**Phenomenology**

Phenomenology and hermeneutics are strains of philosophy and qualitative psychological research which assert the subjectivity of reality. Phenomenology as a concept, has traditionally proved difficult to define, however there is some universal agreement among phenomenological researchers around its central concern being a return to embodied, experiential meanings (Finlay, 2009). Phenomenology has been defined by some as the study of the subjective, lived experience of the individual (Valle, King & Halling, 1989). It is a move away from Cartesian dualism, where reality is considered to be a phenomenon outside of the individual, and the individual seeks to learn about an objective truth which exists independent of their inquiry (Laverty, 2003).
Hermeneutics, by comparison, is concerned with linguistic meanings and the ontological over the epistemological (Annells 1996). Phenomenology is identified as being derived from practical lived experiences whereas hermeneutics is concerned with the correlation of language and understanding as an indissoluble characteristic of being in the world (Laverty, 2003). Hermeneutics, states every act of research to be an act of interpretation (Cole & Avison, 2007). While the current research is concerned with the analysis of a text, in the form of reflective journals, something traditionally associated with hermeneutic inquiry, the study is positioned in the area phenomenology. Its focus is on the experience of journaling, personal development and the formulation of an integrated theory of practice rather than a detailed analysis of the text itself. This is distinctly facilitated in the current study by the fact that the participant is also the researcher, and so potential hidden meanings within the text can be more accurately be discussed.

Moustakas tells us that heuristic research exists within the field of phenomenology, but that it differs from hermeneutic thinking in that with heuristics, "the focus is exclusively and continually aimed at understanding human experience" (Moustakas, 1994). It is the task of the heuristic researcher to examine the phenomenon, not the interpretation of the phenomenon. In this way, I will be attempting to stay as close to the experience as I can, to restrain myself from becoming analytical of the journal itself, all the while engaging in the ostensibly contradictory process of distancing my 'self' as the researcher from the 'self' who created the entries.

**Research design**

Having positioned heuristic inquiry in terms of phenomenology and qualitative research in psychology, I will now discuss the research method itself. Heuristic inquiry was developed by Clark Moustakas when he decided to analyse his personal experience of loneliness (Moustakas, 1961). It comes from the Greek word *heuriskein*, meaning to discover or find or serving to find out. It is a process of internal searching which puts forward 'the total person as a research method' (Moustakas, 1981: p210). It involves a learning of a phenomenon
based not on a superficial cognitive evaluation but instead on a deeper, less conscious connection that the researcher makes with the topic. It explicitly places emphasis on a type of learning that arises when the researcher becomes fully involved in the process of learning about a phenomenon on a conscious and unconscious level. Heuristics does not only explicitly acknowledge the involvement of the researcher, but in fact sees the researcher as the research. Moustakas follows on from Polanyi’s (1964, 1966, 1969) work on the tacit dimension of information processing and Buber’s theorising on dialogue and mutuality (Buber, 1965). He builds on Bridgeman’s (1950) delineation of subject-objective truth, and Gendlin’s (1962) analysis of meaning of experiencing. Based on these ideas, Moustakas talks about his approach to learning, understanding and problem solving. He says that “when I consider an issue, problem or question I enter into it fully. I focus on it with unwavering attention and interest. I search introspectively, meditatively and reflectively into it's nature and meaning” (Moustakas, 2002, p.263). He makes a definitive distinction between knowing what something is on a superficial level and knowing about the nature of what a phenomenon truly is.

Moustakas (1990) informs us that we must begin the heuristic investigation from our own self-awareness, with reference to a question or problem until an essential insight is achieved, one that will throw an initial light on to a critical human experience. He writes about the problem or question that we intend to use heuristics to solve or answer. He implies that only certain questions and problems would be appropriate for the application of heuristics.

So, if only certain questions are appropriate for this kind of inquiry, what type of phenomenon is it that is uniquely suitable to heuristic investigation? Moustakas says that “I begin the heuristic journey with something that has called to me from within my life experience, something to which I have associations and fleeting awareness but whose nature is largely unknown” (Moustakas, 1990, p.13). Within the current study, the phenomenon under investigation is psychotherapy integration, with analysis of my own reflective journals serving as the means of my accessing less conscious awareness. Frick argues that looking at ones tacit awareness does not imply a lack of rigour in method, saying that heuristics requires “rigorous definition, careful collection of data and
a thorough and disciplined analysis” (Frick, 1990, p 79). The road, he argues, to the unconscious, is there to be found and that it's discovery is the research. He argues that the fact that the method is not prescriptively definitive from the outset of the research does not detract from it's validity. The onus is therefore on the individual researcher to describe and demonstrate clearly to the reader so as to inform them of what the research involved. Not to show the reader the road to their own unconscious but instead to facilitate them to find their own road. Bronowski (1965) spoke about heuristics helping to facilitate a search for unity in hidden likenesses. This idea is particularly descriptive of the process of using heuristics for the explication of psychotherapy integration. This inquiry must on some level address the similarities and underlying truth or utility that all of the various schools of psychotherapy share, in order to explain an apparent equivalence of efficacy.

Eraunt (2000) asserts tacit knowledge to be a fully definable phenomenon. He talks about various types of learning, from what he calls codified, public knowledge which is “subject to quality control by editors, peer review and debate” (Eraunt, 2000, p 114) to personal knowledge which he claims to incorporate wider knowledge in a more personal form. Encapsulated within this personal knowledge is also procedural knowledge, process knowledge and experiential knowledge as well as impressions and memories. It is within the sphere of personal knowledge that tacit awareness resides (Eraunt, 2000). It is therefore arguable that the person most responsible and most fully capable of researching such knowledge is the very subject whose knowledge is under investigation. Heuristics is often used as a method of analysing qualitative interviews gained from what are referred to as 'co-researchers'. Within the current study however, the participant and the researcher are one and the same and it is the proposition of the current research that the individual most capable of in-depth analysis of the most tacit form of awareness is the individual experiencing it.

Polanyi argues that all knowledge is tacit or tacitly understood (Moustakas, 1990). Sternberg and Horwath (1999) tell us that people have more knowledge than just that which they know that they know. The type of human knowledge which is grounded within the experience and the activity that produced it, is
what they define as tacit knowledge. This level of awareness applies in particular to our knowledge and acquisition of skills says Polanyi (1962), citing examples such as riding a bicycle or swimming as illustrations of that which we don’t quite know how we know. He talks about how we may be able to say that we are able to swim or bicycle, but that we may not be able to explain how we go about maintaining our balance on a bike or how we stay afloat in the water (Polanyi, 1962).

These examples are not dissimilar to the practice of psychotherapy. As previously stated, psychotherapy is not a theoretically cohesive discipline and there is a lack of agreement as to what defines and constitutes the phenomenon. It is a service or a skill set (or perhaps something else entirely) that although therapists may be competent in delivering, they may not necessarily be able to define. Therapists from competing orientations may define the same piece of therapy as having accomplished different goals for different reasons. Therefore, when discussing how we learn that which we cannot necessarily define, we must look to the acquisition of the tacit knowledge which functions to create competent therapists, rather than the objective, codified knowledge and the skills or rules which are subject to debate. In a way, the assertion of the current research echoes Rogers' statement that “what is most personal is most universal”, (Rogers, 1961 p.26) when it claims that the less personal knowledge about psychotherapy might be up for debate, whereas the more fundamental tacit learning might be generalisable and actually more definable and consistent. Therefore, the current research explores heuristics as a potentially useful means of trainee therapists arriving at cohesive, integrated theory of practice.

Moustakas (1990) explains the six phases of heuristic inquiry. The researcher will move backwards and forwards between stages many times throughout the process (West, 2001). The stages are as follows.

- Initial Engagement
- Immersion
- Incubation
- Illumination
Initial engagement

Within heuristic inquiry, initial engagement refers to the manner in which the researcher first becomes acquainted, passionately and intimately with the research question. Moustakas (1990) talks about discovering “an intense interest, a passionate concern that calls out to the researcher, one that holds important social meanings and personal, compelling implications” (Moustakas, 1990 p.27). He discusses a personal, subjective engagement with the question and the act of willingly and completely entering into it, using one’s own life experience, prior to and during the study to illuminate the research question and the research itself. In the case of the current research, complete engagement with the topic was easily facilitated by means of the fact that I was completing a professional doctorate in counselling psychology which involved lectures and case discussion, class presentations, academic supervision, writing theoretical and research papers, clinical practice placements, clinical supervision and personal therapy. All of these components of the program were, to some extent, focussed on questions around the nature of psychotherapy. In this section, I will discuss my initial engagement with psychology and psychotherapy as well as with the idea of integration and I will talk about the process by which I arrived at the research questions.

I believe that my initial engagement with psychology began at an early age. The following is an excerpt from my reflective journal that was written as part of a class assignment given during a lecture on the topic of ‘The Wounded Healer’. The assignment brief was around looking at our past and our childhoods to identify the aetiology of our motivation to work as psychotherapists:

26/05/2011:
I guess I have always been someone who has talked to my friends about their problems, I suppose, in lots of ways, me making the decision to study psychology wasn’t strange at all. It might have felt strange to me but it wasn’t to the people who knew me. My friends
always called me “the psychologist”.

Later in this entry, I continued to speak about the idea that I had been working as something of an amateur psychologist from a young age, having “always been someone people had come to with their problems and issues” (Journal, 26/05/2011). I spoke about the unusual comfort with which I sat with people and their “stuff” and the kind of “weird curiosity” that I had displayed about the inner world of other people from “a very young age” (Journal, 26/05/11). I talked about how, in retrospect, it seemed unusual for a young boy to sit with these things quite happily, especially having had no extreme discernible “emotional trauma” of my own. I talked about having had a desire to do more than “just listen”, and my wanting to acquire the skills and techniques of a psychologist so that I could actively intervene and help people in a practical way. I contrasted the perspective of my younger self with my opinion now of what is important and whether I might just have been a better psychotherapist at age 10 then I am now. As I continued to write, I explored a potential cultural aspect of my interest in psychotherapy and how coming from a large Irish Catholic family had meant that conversations about what was going on in other people’s lives was a mainstay of my upbringing. I talked about my ambivalent attitude towards what I perceived as ‘gossip’, as well as about the fact that this is a facet human nature. I discussed how this curiosity had manifested as an interest in comic books, film and television and other aspects of popular culture. As a child and teenager I had enjoyed “imposing a kind of narrative” (Journal, 26/05/11) on my own life and this storying of my experiences had not only led me to my earlier training in art and computer animation, but also to my interest in a more qualitative, discursive research method.

In one entry in my reflective journal I talk about my initial engagement with psychotherapy integration (Journal 17/06/11). I spoke about having ‘minored’ in psychoanalysis while doing my ‘major’ in psychology at degree level. I spoke about my skills training in my MSc in Health Psychology as having been integrative on a technical level. My counselling skills certificate had also been integrative (or perhaps eclectic), being both solution focused and person centred, though I wasn’t fully aware of this at the time. In this entry I talked about not originally having had an issue with integrating psychotherapy on the
level of skills and technique, however as I began reading in depth about psychotherapy theory, I found the idea of integrating on the level of theory and philosophy to be a much more difficult task. I talked about integration as necessarily having to be “something which happens at a deeper level […] a level of fundamentals and philosophy” (Journal, 17/06/11), something that comes from knowledge of a more tacit variety. So while my initial engagement with integrative psychotherapy did not begin with my doctoral training, my interest and knowledge of theoretical integration did.

The research questions

When I originally conceptualised my research project, I wanted to broadly reflect on my experience of becoming an integrative psychotherapist over the course of my professional doctorate, however, as the project continued, it became increasingly apparent that I would need to harness this wide reaching research brief into a more clearly articulated research question in order to focus my heuristic inquiry.

Therefore the research question developed into:

- **What was my personal experience of constructing an integrative theory of practice?**

The aim of the research was to document and understand my subjective process of becoming an integrative practitioner. It sought to explore how I, as a trainee, learned about practice and integrated theories, a process for which there is currently no overarching and cohesive paradigm. It sought to understand and explain the process of integration in some subjective manner. It hoped also to unearth some subjective truth about therapy and integration that can facilitate this trainee and future integrationists to overcome some of the theoretical inconsistencies that occur in the field of psychotherapy.
I also wanted to discuss my experience in terms of the utility or lack thereof that I found in the process of heuristic analysis of a learning journal in the process of self-directed doctoral-level learning. I wished to explore the potential utility that heuristics might have in the process of educating future therapists. Therefore it will look at not only what was learned but also how it was learned.

I wanted to discuss my experience of reflective writing, as well as my use of heuristics to analyse the process and its utility in helping me become a competent integrationist. I sought to explore it in relation to the existing literature and the nature of training as it currently stands to attempt to potentially contribute something meaningful to the training research. If I came to an understanding of whether this process worked for me and the reasons its was or was not effective, I hoped that I could impart something of use to the under researched areas of personal development and the ways in which trainees construct an integrative theory of practice. Therefore a second research question was formulated:

What contribution can my heuristic investigation of reflective writing offer to integrative psychotherapy training?

The experience that I am commenting on is an inherently subjective and personal one and any idea’s or recommendations that I might be able to put forth would be merely informed by my own individual experience. That being said, however, while my experience was idiosyncratic and potentially a completely unique one that might have no bearing on any other individuals’ process, heuristic research seeks to take individual accounts and unearth something fundamental and universal about the experience on a tacit level. Moustakas carried out his first heuristic inquiry into loneliness and through reflection on his experience of it was able to make a meaningful statement about the phenomenon of loneliness itself. Therefore, my objective to describe my process of cultivating an integrative philosophy, in order to make some
useful statement about the experience itself, is not inconsistent with the essential nature of heuristics.

**Immersion**

The first stage of heuristics that Moustakas sets out is called immersion. Once the topic of the research and the research question(s) have been defined the researcher “fully lives the research while awake, asleep and dreaming” (West, 1998 p.62). The stage of immersion is one of focussed and sustained attention and is facilitated by self-dialogue, self-searching, following intuition and observing dreams.

In my research proposal, I stated my expectations around how the immersion process would unfold:

*Over the next year I will, as a trainee counselling psychologist, be immersed in the process of becoming an integrative therapist. I will be keeping a reflective journal cataloguing and describing my experiences as a trainee. I will be discussing my reactions to and opinions on the theoretical aspects of psychotherapy and integration. I will be reflecting on my practice with clients and discussing rationales for therapeutic interventions, discussing my intentions, efficacy of intervention as well as possible learning points. This will be situated within literature on therapy and integration. In keeping with Moustakas idea of immersion I will also be attempting to draw parallels between the therapeutic experience and the experience of becoming a therapist to other aspects of my life. I want to document changes that happen in me as a person and have a place to process changes within me that I cannot yet fully anticipate. The reflective journal will not only include my writings about the process. It will also contain pictures, photographs, drawings and other media which I feel has some resonance with the journey. It will also contain reflective writing on my therapy sessions with clients, as well as my own personal therapy. Process notes, records of clinical and academic supervision meetings, and lecture notes will also be included. In June 2012 I plan to amalgamate all these elements into one tangible physical document, scanning the visual documents, and*
handwritten notes, so as to have one electronic document to work from. I will study this document in detail in preparation for incubation.

The way in which the immersion phase actually manifested, while largely adhering to the research plan, was not exactly the way I had envisioned it in the proposal. For instance, my reflective journal did not end up containing as many mixed media conceptualisations of my process, but rather, mostly contains explicit, literal, self-dialogue around my experiences as a therapist trainee. I wrote a lot about myself as a trainee and about the anxieties that I felt over the process of training in something which defies (or at least resists) definition. I wrote about what I thought therapy was at this particular moment in time and about how it was not necessarily similar to the opinion that I had staunchly defended in my previous entry. I spoke about some feelings of certainty, which I came to realise were transitory, and the anxieties around feeling that what I was theorising about in a particular entry, right as it may have seemed at the time, would at some point, give way to new theories which would potentially contradict that which I was currently choosing to believe. I spoke a lot about a desire to find a way of integrating all off these potential truths into one, greater, overarching truth that might come to be all-encompassing of the process of therapy. That one truth can only be meaningful if it relates in some way to all of the others truths that are existing together. My anxieties around this ambiguity were further fuelled by the fact that I was doing all of this wondering about what it is to practice therapy, while actually practising therapy. It reminded me of what Yalom said in Staring at the Sun: “in this, as in all things, there is a huge difference between knowing about something and knowing it through your own experience” (Yalom, 2008, p.42).

The process of journaling was not as structured as I had anticipated (see section 3.4 Data Generation). I did not allot certain periods of time for journaling, and did not approach the practice of journaling in an extremely systematic manner. I journaled when I felt it was necessary for my understanding of psychotherapy, which, as it turned out, was almost daily. I often journaled before and after practising therapy, and before and after supervision. I would record insights from my own personal therapy, less in terms of what I had learned about myself from the therapeutic encounter, as much as
how what I had learned about myself from therapy facilitated my learning about what therapy truly was. I journaled in lectures, linking new facets of therapeutic knowledge and learning into a more superordinate knowledge about the meaning of psychotherapy. I recorded the many insights I gained from completing the theoretical and research papers which were requirements of the training programme. I talked about the significant relationships in my life, and how learning about myself as a friend, a son, a boyfriend, a co-worker, a colleague, a supervisee and a client gave me insights into how I function as a therapist. While I discuss some of this later, in the Data Generation section, the immersion phase was more than just the writing of journal entries. It was the lived experience of becoming an integrative therapist. Moustakas (1990 p. 28) asserts that “virtually anything connected with the question becomes raw material for immersion”. If the keeping of the journal might appear somewhat hermeneutic in nature, then the immersion phase was certainly phenomenological.

Tacit awareness was facilitated in the immersion phase. I was often able to acknowledge the feelings I was having after I came from therapy as not being my own, but in fact, those of my clients and looking back on these entries assisted me in realising the extent to which these emotions did not belong to me, and were, in fact very much borrowed. I wrote about leaving sessions with a client who had been consistently abused and let down by her parents, feeling resentment towards my own parents. When I was seeing a male client who had difficulties with gaining approval from his father I projected these feelings onto my desire to gain approval from my supervisor (though, it must be said, that some of these were very much my own trainee anxieties and my own desires for reassurance). I would write about the pleasure I would take in helping to organise the lives of chronic procrastinators, while not always being successful in my own attempts to overcome my own somewhat chaotic or undisciplined approach to goal achievement. In particular, was my discomfort with and lack of competence when it comes to ending relationships in my own life, and how I worked through that whilst saying poignant goodbyes to my most valued therapeutic relationships.

My writing influenced my therapy and my therapy influenced my writing. It was
within this reciprocal relationship that the learning occurred. Through undergoing this process, I uncovered more tacit, fundamental research questions: What is psychotherapy, really? What isn't psychotherapy? And can we practice psychotherapy without having decided what we think the meaning of life is?

**Incubation**

Moustakas describes incubation as “the process in which the researcher retreats from the intense, concentrated focus on the question” (Moustakas, 1990, p.28). The motivation for this self-imposed intellectual respite is “to seek a deeper more extended comprehension of the nature or meaning of a quality or theme of human experience” (Moustakas, 1990, p.24). The researcher is to purposely and completely remove themselves and their awareness from the topic being researched, as well as everything related to the topic. It is at this point that the researchers inner workings, tacit awareness or unconscious mind, digests and processes the information. It is contention of heuristic inquiry that by distancing their conscious awareness from the material that had been so rigorously examined on a cognitive level, the researcher can become aware of the most fundamental aspects of the research in a deeper, less conscious, more meaningful way. Polanyi (1969) discusses how tacit, unconscious knowledge makes its way into conscious awareness in such a manner (Polanyi, 1969). Perkins (2000) writes about how taking time away from a problem allows the unconscious mind to keep working on it and how this leads to arriving at a solution (Perkins, 2000).

In the current study I cut myself off from research, practice and lectures during August and September of 2012. Taught input on my doctoral programme had concluded and I had discontinued my placement activities primarily as a result of the fact that my contract had ended. This had the serendipitous fortuity of occurring just as my symptoms of the dreaded (yet ubiquitous) therapist burn-out could no longer be disguised. I do not want to expend a lot of time and words discussing this experience, as its utility, in terms of the research, and the explication of the phase of incubation is limited. It will however be discussed
Incubation took place in these months, by necessity as much as by design and it was not without its surprises. I had been especially anticipating this particular phase of heuristics. It involved taking a holiday as a legitimate and necessary part of my research, and removing myself from the intense focus of the heuristic process. I imagined that it would not be a difficult task to adhere to. The following entry from my reflective journal demonstrates that this did not turn out to be the case.

13/10/12:

In practice, the stage of incubation felt more like being separated from someone that you love and being told to not think about them, whilst no longer spending hours every week writing them love letters. (At this juncture, I feel the need to insist that I was not, actually physically attracted to psychotherapy). Whilst [on holidays] I attempted with as much sustained effort as I could muster, to take my mind off the subject, with varying levels of success. I did not manage to fully break my complete dependence on journaling until well into September. I did what I was supposed to do...I went away, attempting to restrain myself from having conversations about psychology, psychotherapy and the meaning of life, generally. I got away and did my best to avoid these conversations and here's what I found: When I did my part, it wasn't that hard. At all. As it turns out, people aren't as interested in these types of discussions as I had thought. Once I stopped bringing it up when I met people, I realised that every stranger I encountered didn't actually have deeply held, passionate opinions that needed to be expressed, on the meaning of life and how we, as human beings, could go about facilitating happiness in our fellow man. As it turns out, they were happy enough to talk about the weather.

It is Moustakas contention that the period of incubation will lead to what he calls illumination.
Illumination

Illumination is stated to occur as a natural result of the previous phases of heuristics. After the information has been processed unconsciously, new elements and novel perspectives emerge. Moustakas claims illumination to be a powerful moving of unconscious knowledge into the conscious mind of the researcher to the point where it may even involve corrections of distorted understandings or disclosure of hidden meanings (Moustakas, 1990). Illumination is the 'eureka' moment, which takes place long after the information needed to solve the problem has been taken in, but when the complex processing has occurred and a solution spontaneously emerges from tacit awareness. As a result of the researcher having stepped outside of the conscious striving in the incubation phase, the mind becomes receptive to the deeper, more fundamental aspects of the research topic.

Discussing how the process of illumination actually occurred in practice is a more complex task. The illumination within the current research was planned to take place in September or October of the 2012, however scheduling in the 'eureka' moment that is catalysed by important tacit information becoming conscious proved to also be difficult. In reality, as discussed by Moustakas (1990) and Sela-Smith (2002) the process of incubation and illumination, are not fixed, discreet stages, but instead are fluid phases that one moves between, back and forth, until ideas solidify. In the current study, ideas about what the illumination of the research was came at different points and although there were some moments within the research which certainly felt illuminatory, some of these took place within the immersion phase, while journaling, before incubation even occurred. Those times of learning during the journaling stage of the process must be recognised as conscious learning, which is not the same as the illumination that occurs within the less conscious areas of awareness, after incubation. This is the case even if incubation didn't change the conscious idea, but rather, just facilitated an unconscious acquaintance with it.

In my research proposal, I discussed how illumination might prove to be a
difficult phase to plan or schedule, and that the pressure to expedite some innovative and auspicious insight might prove somewhat problematic. I stated that, in practice, due to time constraints and a pressing need for illumination to transpire, if this somewhat intangible process failed to come about, I would enact a back up plan in the form of a hypothesised re-immersion and re-incubation in order to attempt to catalyse the occurrence of illumination through a more contrived, focused version of the stages of heuristics directed toward the goal of illumination. In practice, however, illumination occurred as a less esoteric, and more tangible phenomenon than had been expected. Becoming aware of the tacit understandings of the phenomenon proved to be a less intangible, ethereal occurrence and actually functioned as what might be referred to as a dependable, potentially more replicable procedure in terms of facilitating analogous future research.

**Explication**

Once illumination has occurred, the process of explication fully examines what has come into the conscious awareness of the researcher. This stage is a “comprehensive elucidation” (Moustakas, 1990 p. 31), thoroughly examining and defining the meanings that have been made at the illumination stage. The researcher identifies themes at a deeper level leading to “a comprehensive depiction of the essences of the experience” (Moustakas, 1990, p.31). It is a process which facilitates the solidifying of the new knowledge, through the description of what exactly has been found.

In the current research, explication manifested as a result of focusing and indwelling directed towards the process of counselling psychology training. The tacit elements that became apparent in the illumination phase are to be brought together in a more cohesive way in the stage of explication. Moustakas (1990), likens this phase to opening a door to new awareness, a modification of an old understanding, a synthesis of fragmented knowledge, or a new discovery. In the current study, meanings and themes were more fully constructed, organised and described within the findings section. Themes which continued to appear
were reflected upon, interpreted and discussed and analysed.

In the current research explication is represented by the thematic analysis that takes place in the findings section. This process is elaborated upon later in this chapter in the Data Analysis: Heuristics section.

**Creative synthesis**

This final stage is the culmination of the previous phases. The themes are expressed in some form of creative output. This usually manifests as a narrative depiction involving verbatim material or transcripts. It can take other forms, however, such as a poem, a drawing or a painting (West, 1998). It is important for the researcher to move away from the particulars of the data, in order to produce something that is more than just the sum of its parts. Creative synthesis must go beyond the themes that were come up with in the explication stage to create something original and new, which represents the data. It must be a result of intuition and imagination that comes as a result of the intimate, personal relationship with the data. It is the “personal knowledge of meanings and essences of the experience” that inevitably facilitates the process of representing the data in such a creative manner” (Moustakas, 1990, p.50).

Within my research, the phase of creative synthesis manifests as six pieces of visual art which represent each of the themes that emerged from the analysis of the reflective journal. They are presented later, in the analysis of data chapter. They take my writings about my experience of training, which exists in a conscious, cognitive medium into one which creatively expresses the feelings that I was having around this experience and facilitated learning at a much greater, deeper level.

**Data generation: Journaling**

The data generation procedure in the current study took the form of the keeping
of my own reflective learning journal. The use of personal journaling as an appropriate method of data collection for accomplishing the task of reflecting on new learnings around psychotherapy integration and unearthing some new knowledge, or bringing about more tacit, experiential learning will now be explored. It is not, the literatures show, without precedent.

Etherington states a belief that the community for whom she is writing fully acknowledges that counselling and psychotherapy can only be enhanced by the type of scrutiny and personal development provided by journaling, and that therapeutic practice can be greatly enhanced by knowing the inner story that we tell ourselves ( Etherington, 2001). This is the philosophical basis of the current research, which, even while in its infancy, explicitly predicted that keeping a learning journal, reflecting on both the self as a personal development tool as well as the process of becoming a therapist as a learning tool, would be ultimately beneficial for training.

Carl Rogers (1961), the man often considered the founder of humanistic psychology, stated much of his learning as a therapist to have occurred as a result of reflecting upon his work with clients and William James, one of the founding fathers of psychology itself said “introspective observation is what we have to rely on first and foremost and always” (James, 1950. p.185). As discussed earlier, introspection, as a means of scientific investigation goes back as far as the inception of scientific psychology itself.

Jasper claims reflective practice to be a legitimate strategy to enhance the research process (Jasper, 2005) with reflective journaling allowing exploration of practice, development of analytical and critical thinking and the connection of disparate ideas. These, she states, are the same attributes required for carrying out research (Jasper, 2005). Therefore, reflective journaling can be seen as, not only a way to learn about integrating theories, but also to learn about learning. It is in this way that the current research serves as a pilot study, to explore the potential utility of heuristic inquiry as a means of acquiring theoretical knowledge for trainee’s struggling with complex philosophical learning.
In her 2004 paper, entitled, "Heuristic research as a vehicle for personal and professional development", Etherington (2004b) positions reflexive methodologies specifically within the field of counselling and psychotherapy, while Jasper says that “reflective writing has become established as a key component of reflective practice, and central to the notion of learning from experience.” (Jasper, 2005 p.247). The idea of analysing the reflective journals of therapists and trainee's is not a new one. Fitzpatrick, Kovalak and Weaver (2010) used grounded theory to analyse the journals of trainee counsellors to assess the development of their initial theory of practice. They found that various personal, professional and cultural factors contributed to such development and that determining how all of these factors interact to become orientations has received minimal research (Fitzpatrick, Kovalak and Weaver, 2010), a paucity that the current study aims to address.

Hill, Sullivan, Knox and Schlosser, (2007) investigated five doctoral trainees experiences of becoming counselling psychologists, using qualitative analysis of weekly journal entries. They state the importance of researching reflective writing on early client work and argue that initial training experiences provide the foundations for the subsequent formation of a theory of practice (Hill, Sullivan, Knox and Schlosser, 2007). They discuss the gaps within the current literature with regards the study of the training process, identifying this as an area in need of further research (Hill, Sullivan, Knox and Schlosser, 2007). Shepherd (2006) discusses how he improved his professional practice by keeping a reflective journal, describing it as a way to become a researcher of one's own practice (Shepherd, 2006). He promotes it, not just as a means of fostering self-awareness and addressing the under acknowledged area of personal development, but also for the improving of practice. He puts forward a reflective framework, where an event is first described objectively, before being looked at subjectively when the researcher asks ‘how do I feel about this?’, ‘what do I think of this?’, ‘what have I learned from this?’ and ‘what action will I take as a result of my lesson learned?’. He espouses the need to not only understand the nature of our practice, but also to understand more about ourselves so we can understand why it is we practice in a particular way, how
we use our values to underpin and shape our practice, and how this contributes to a better understanding and sense of self (Shepherd, 2006).

The aim of the journaling in the current study was to understand what it means to become an integrative counselling psychologist, to construct an integrative theory of practice and to understand how trainee therapists go about this task. A potential aim of the research was to pilot a method for understanding the personal and professional development of a trainee counselling psychologist, as personal development forms a fulcrum to the training. This goal must necessarily take an approach that is fully subjective; that is a very personal evaluation of theory and experiences in practice and of the meaning made of these. Therefore, this project seeks to fully understand and investigate the subjective experience of one individual therapist’s journey, using heuristics to make sense of this journey. In this study, I refer to the process of journaling as being ‘reflective’, rather than ‘reflexive’. While the very nature of using oneself in research to the degree in the current study can be seen as ‘reflexive’, the term ‘reflective’ has a more cognitive connotation, which more accurately represents the data generation process. The data generation process was not intended to be aware of itself in terms of the research, but rather to function as a place to reflect on the experience without constraint. Reflexivity has been described as “the capacity of the researcher to acknowledge how their own experiences and contexts (which might be fluid and changing) inform the process and outcomes of inquiry” (Etherington, 2004a, p. 31), and facilitates a closing of the gap between researcher and researched (Etherington, 2004a). For the purposes of this research, I attempted not to do this and to make a distinction between my role as researcher and participant, and to make a, somewhat arbitrary, delineation between the data generation as being ‘reflective’, while the data analysis process, as a heuristic inquiry could be considered ‘reflexive’.

I began keeping the journal towards the end of 2010, at the beginning of my doctoral training. The process of journaling was less structured than had been anticipated. In my research proposal I discussed formal structures I wanted to adhere to in the writing up of my process, however, in practice, this served to divorce me from tacit elements of learning, and so I discontinued. I journaled
about therapy in the same way I practiced therapy, maintaining a non-directive focus in order to facilitate the surfacing of unconscious content. I journaled after clinical practice and during lectures, attempting to make sense of the knowledge, both explicit and experiential. However, I also journaled everywhere else. On the bus, in my bed, in the park, in cafe's, on aeroplane's and even in pubs. Everything that happened in my life became an, occasionally tenuous, parallel process to psychotherapy integration. Many of the conversations I had socially, even, found their way around to the topic of psychotherapy and meaning making.

Moustakas recommends becoming intimately acquainted with the subject matter and the question to be answered (Moustakas, 1990). This, I can state with certainty, was accomplished. I became intimately and experientially acquainted with various types and aspects of psychotherapy, learning in university, practising at placement and writing about it in my journal. I particularly engaged with a process of identifying with the theorist rather than just with the theory. This was facilitated by reading the writings of the theorists themselves, not just reading about the theories or approaches in journals and textbooks. It was facilitated also by being able to watch video footage of eminent psychologists like Jon Kabat-Zinn, Irvin Yalom and Albert Ellis discussing their theories, or watching footage of therapists in practice such as Carl Rogers, Leslie Greenberg and Fritz Perls, or even watching film adaptations of their lives, such as Carl Jung and Sigmund Freud. In this way, by getting to know the thinkers better, I was able to connect with their ideas at a more experiential level, and this mirrored the process of my journaling, where I came to know myself better and therefore was able to more fully connect with my own ideas about therapy.

**Data analysis: Thematic analysis within a heuristic framework**

I will now discuss the data analysis of the current research, positioning it in terms of research that has gone before. Etherington discusses the difficulty of fitting heuristic research into a recognised research format, because it is "an
unfolding process which could not be known about or planned in advance” (Etherington, 2001 p. 121). She states that the fundamental utility of heuristics lies in the emphasis it puts on the researcher to make a personal connection and relationship with the topic (Etherington, 2001). In this way, it can be difficult to describe the specific details of the research in a way that can demonstrate trustworthiness, however, great efforts must be made to do this, in order to maintain the rigour that is central of qualitative methodologies. While the relationship that the researcher develops with the research is a deeply personal and idiosyncratic one, the process by which one documents and explicates this process need not be.

Hiles (2002) discusses the idea of knowing through participation and that counselling and psychotherapy are "authentic, participatory processes", which "explicitly acknowledge the involvement of the researcher" (Hiles, 2002; no page). He states heuristics to be the most appropriate form of research for such an investigation (Hiles, 2002). Etherington talks about "the integration and personal development that may occur when we use ourselves in heuristic research, particularly in the process of writing" (Etherington, 2001 p. 119). In this context, Etherington is discussing the idea of integrating various versions of herself through the process of reflecting on her research and practice with clients. She discusses the tensions that go along with moving between roles of researcher and therapist, and how heuristics is especially useful for managing this.

Nuttall carried out a heuristic study of the process of integration, and his findings suggest “that both psychotherapy integration and heuristic enquiry can only be conducted on an individual and personal basis, and that it is the quality of the relationship, with the client, or the research material, that produces results” (Nuttall, 2006 p. 429). Nelson-Jones says that “studying theories of psychotherapy is both an intellectual undertaking and a personal journey” (Nelson-Jones, 2001, p.1) and Nuttall talks of his research having been “constituted mainly by […] training, reading, and clinical experience over the period of the programme” (Nuttall, 2006 p.430). He elaborates on this saying that “the research programme started with the relatively simple objective of
learning more about the many systems of psychotherapy I encountered as a trainee psychotherapist. As I progressed, the question became one of whether, and in what ways, these systems might be integrated, and the final objective was to formulate an understanding of the process of personal psychotherapy integration” (Nuttall, 2006, p.431). Nuttall discusses the necessity of such introspective thought in overcoming a field rife with foundational beliefs which are taken for granted and go unchallenged, and the contribution to knowledge of such study, providing an explanation of the underlying processes of integration so “future integrationists might be further enabled to decide for themselves their own approach to psychotherapy integration” (Nuttall, 2006 p. 432). It was the intention of the current research to produce a similar contribution to knowledge, and to build upon and contribute to this burgeoning area of investigation. He continues to extol the virtues of heuristic research for the study of psychotherapy integration saying that “in accordance with [this] epistemological view, I decided that psychotherapy and psychotherapy integration were not fixed, agreed upon, or measurable phenomena appropriate for positivistic quantitative research” (Nuttall, 2006 p. 432). The current study makes a similar contention.

Turner, Gibson, Bennetts and Hunt (2008) used heuristic research to analyse trainees’ reflective journaling on the process of becoming therapists. The authors were both participant and researcher of their own heuristic process and the study was written up as the main researcher’s doctoral dissertation. Some of the themes that were uncovered were “learning about therapy”, “struggles with confidence”, “learning about ourselves”, “time anxiety”, “trusting the process” and “challenges and rewards of being a therapist”. The authors state the heuristic process to have helped them gain new perspectives on each of these areas. The creative synthesis involved the production of a drawing representing various aspects of the learning that arose. The drawing consisted of a tree with interconnected swirls and a web to symbolise “the inter-related, multi-faceted, and complex nature of [their] learning” (Turner, Gibson, Bennetts & Hunt’s, 2008 p. 178). The drawing also contained a dangling spider and screaming face to “embody the difficulties and challenges that trainee therapists face as they learn and develop as a consequence of their client work” (Turner,
Gibson, Bennetts & Hunt’s, 2008, p.178). Additionally, a clock inside a web and a whirlwind represented time anxiety (Turner, Gibson, Bennetts & Hunt’s, 2008). The researchers suggest the contribution to knowledge to be the implementation of critical evaluation of learning within therapist training as well as the awareness of the emotional demands put on novice trainees. It is in some of these ways that previous research has affirmed heuristic research of one’s own journaling as being a unique, yet credible contribution to academic knowledge.

For purposes of trustworthiness, the heuristic process, and how it manifested specifically in the current research will now be elaborated upon before I detail how the themes were produced using thematic analysis. There were three reflective journals in total, which overall contained 287 pages with approximately 98,000 words. An effort was made throughout the journaling process not to read through my own writing until the journaling phase had been completed. In this way, the delineation between my role as the participant (who generated the journal entries) and my role as the researcher (who analysed the data) was relatively well maintained. After the journaling phase ended, I took time away from the process before beginning my analysis. This functioned as one of the incubation phases. After reading through all the journal entries once, another incubation phase was implemented, and I returned to the data at a later date to more formally code it using thematic analysis informed by heuristic theory.

The research methodology employed in the current study differed somewhat to that of a traditional heuristic enquiry. While the research that was undertaken adheres to many of the concepts and processes outlined by Moustakas in his 1990 text, it was not possible to adhere to all of the steps outlined in a traditional heuristic research design because of the atypical nature of the current research. Heuristic methodology is usually used to analyse the accounts taken from participants or ‘co-researchers’ and involves the researcher’s use of their own rigorous and exhaustive self searching to bring about new awareness from their own less conscious, tacit processes. It essentially uses the self of the
researcher to facilitate the emerging of new awareness from information given to the researcher by other people on their experience. In the current study, the heuristic process was employed to generate new awareness on the part of the researcher on data that was proffered by the researcher himself. As a result of this, there are some notable differences between this study and a more conventional heuristic enquiry. Conventional might appear to be an unusual term to use in relation to heuristic research due to the unorthodox nature of the very concept of this methodology, however it is this very lack of orthodoxy on a fundamental level that makes the argument for my research theoretically consist with the spirit of Moustakas' philosophy. Heuristics, by its very nature involves moving away from ideas of objective reality and towards subjective truths and therefore the researcher utilising the heuristic process to analyse his own reflections can be argued to be not just theoretically consistent but an obvious and inevitable evolution of this research method.

I have earlier laid out the ways in which the stages of heuristics (initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication and creative synthesis) manifested in the current research. The current research also adhered significantly to the overarching concepts inherent to the heuristic method. One of the principles of heuristics is identifying with the focus of inquiry, which Moustakas describes as coming from opened ended, self-directed search and involving immersion in active experience to reach an inverted perspective or to get inside the question (Moustakas, 1990). This process of becoming one with what one is seeking to know on an experiential level was easily facilitated in the current research due to the fact that throughout the research process I was completing a professional doctorate in counselling psychology and was keeping a reflective journal on the experience. Self dialogue is also a philosophical requisite of this research method and this was promoted by the journalling process, as well as experiential learning within my psychotherapy practice and interactions with colleagues and supervisors. It was through such methods that I was able to "enter into dialogue with the phenomenon allowing the phenomenon to speak directly to [my] own experience, to be questioned by it" (Moustakas 1990, p. 16). Moustakas describes self dialogue in heuristic methodology as bringing about, like any
other science, "a search for unity in hidden likenesses" (Moustakas 1990, p. 16). The scientific search for unity within hidden likenesses in the current research occurred through self dialogue around the latent, underlying cohesion that existed between all of the many psychotherapeutic approaches.

Another philosophical tenet of Moustakas theory is that of tacit knowing, or the ways of knowing that we do not know that we know. Moustakas references Polanyi’s advocating of the importance of tacit awareness, who states that it can be possessed by itself, but that explicit knowledge must rely on being tacitly understood and applied and that hence all the knowledge is either tacit or tacitly understood (Polanyi, 1962). Bringing tacit knowledge into conscious awareness was repeatedly facilitated in the current research through the process of deliberation upon my therapeutic work in my reflective writing. I analysed the ways in which I was engaging with clients and the feelings that I was experiencing during therapy sessions, as well as why I said what I said, why I reacted in specific ways and what guided my decisions around what interventions to make.

Intuition is another fundamental aspect of heuristic research and can be described as "the realm of the between" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 23) bridging the explicit and the tacit. Intuition makes possible the perceiving of phenomena in their entirety, rather than merely as a separate pieces existing in isolation. This was a key aspect of the current study, enabling me to experience psychotherapy as one consistent entity rather than many separate approaches which existed as discrete, distinct systems.

Indwelling involves the process of turning inward and seeking a deeper, more extended comprehension of the nature of an aspect of the human experience. It refers to the process of focusing on wavering attention and concentration into some facet of human experience in order to understand its constituent qualities and its wholeness (Moustakas, 1990). My indwelling on the nature of
psychotherapy led to an abundance of reflections on the nature and meaning of life and happiness as the ultimate goal of the human experience. It was necessary not just to engage with psychotherapy on the superficial, cognitive of technique, but rather to look at therapy as a microcosm, mirroring life outside the therapy room.

Another essential component of heuristic inquiry is focusing, which involves "clearing an inward space to enable one to tap into thoughts and feelings that are essential to clarifying a question [...] elucidating its constituents [and] making contact with its core themes (Moustakas, 1990 p. 25). This focusing of attention and staying with a sustained process of systematically connecting with the more central meanings of experience was facilitated in the current study through meditation. I regularly meditated on experiences I had had both in my provision of psychotherapy as well as from my own personal therapy, after which I would journal on what came into my awareness from entering into a focused, meditative state.

All of these tenets of heuristic research must take place within the internal frame of reference of the researcher. Moustakas states that "only the experiencing persons - by looking at their own experiences in perceptions, thoughts, feelings and sense - can validly provide portrayals of the experiencing" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 26). He references Rogers’ idea of empathic understanding and entering into the internal frame of reference of the other. This was particularly relevant to my research in that what was being researched was psychotherapy itself and entering into the internal frame of reference of the clients with which I worked, helped me to experience psychotherapy rather than just read or learn about it and therefore attempt to cultivate an awareness of the phenomenon that came from a place of tacit and experiential understanding.

Heuristic research data is usually organised and presented in a specific way to convey the nature, meaning and essence of an experience from the vantage
point of the person and group offering first person accounts of their experience with the phenomenon. This ordinarily involves presentations of verbatim material from interviews, examples of individual depictions of experience, composite depictions, portraits and creative synthesis. In the current study, as the research was not generated from interviews with other 'co-researchers', verbatim extracts of interviews were obviously not able to be included in the study, however verbatim extracts from my reflective journal are presented within the data analysis chapter as part of the explication of the themes.

Individual depictions come from the transcribed interview of each co-researcher, combined with other available data such as journals, diaries and personal documents. Composite depictions, on the other hand, are constructed through a process of immersion into and study of the experience of the phenomenon as presented by each co-researcher. Through this analysis of each co-researchers separate account, the qualities, core themes and essences that permeate the experience of the entire group of co-researchers become clarified and a universal depiction is formulated. In this way the researcher is able to construct a kind of grand narrative of the experience. Through finding similarities in the emotional experience of all of the participants the researcher therefore makes a comment about the phenomenon of shyness, or loneliness, or becoming inspired or whatever entity was under investigation. At this point the researcher creates exemplary portraits of the experience of each individual participant based on the individual depictions, but supplemented by demographic and autobiographical material collected and contextualised within the findings of the composite depictions. These all feed into the generating of creative syntheses.

Within the current study, as the researcher was also the sole participant, individual depictions, composite depictions and exemplary portraits were obviously not appropriate. Instead thematic analysis was employed to examine the data and generate themes, as a way of approaching the data that I had produced myself in a structured and an open-minded manner in order to be able to fully describe the steps I took to produce the findings so as this research
could be replicated appropriately by another researcher. While I recognise that I could not approach my own reflections from a dispassionate or objective viewpoint, that was not the goal of the current study and using a structured means of data analysis merely had the objective of engaging with the data from our creative perspective in order to have a new experience with the journal entries rather than just paraphrasing ideas that I had already discussed in my reflective writing. In place of individual and composite depictions and exemplary portraits, the presentation of the current research includes a creative synthesis for each of the themes that were generated.

So therefore, while the current research cannot be said to have adhered to all of the tenets of the traditional research design and the typical presentation of a heuristic inquiry, this study can be argued to have been faithful to the fundamentals of the philosophy of heuristics. Hence, the protocols of the current study might be more appropriately referred to as using the 'heuristic process', if not using 'heuristic research' itself.

**Analysing the data: Thematic Analysis**

Thematic analysis was used to code the data and analyse the themes within a heuristic framework. Thematic analysis has been described as "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data [which] minimally organises and describes your data set in rich detail [and often] interprets various aspects of the research topic" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 6). Thematic analysis was chosen for this task due to the fact that it is often considered to be a "foundational method for qualitative analysis" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 4). Boyatzis (1998) defines it not as a method of analysis in and of itself but rather as a tool that is used within other methods of data analysis, as in the case of the current research. Ryan and Bernard (2000) also describe thematic analysis as not necessarily existing as a method in its own right but argue that thematic coding is a subordinate process that is performed
within other analytic theories. Braun and Clark (2006) argue that most qualitative analysis is actually thematic, but is either claimed as being a different method or not identified as any particular method at all. In the current research, thematic analysis was chosen to analyse and code themes within the overarching analytic process of heuristics due to its theoretical freedom and its flexibility, as well as its ability to "provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 5).

There is some theoretical tension that exists when attempting to utilise thematic analysis within a heuristic process. Braun and Clarke (2006) state that accounts of themes 'emerging' and being 'discovered' are not sufficient for the analytic process, however these kind of terms are often utilised in, and are theoretically consistent with the philosophy of, heuristics. However, Braun and Clarke's rationale for this stance appears to be compatible with Moustakas’ theory. They claim that the language around themes simply 'emerging' suggests that themes merely resided within the data and that it is a naive realist viewpoint that the researcher may simply present the data and 'give voice to' their participants. Heuristic research explicitly places emphasis upon the process through which the researcher engages with the data and analyses it to bring about new knowledge. Therefore heuristics does not simply present data as it is, but searches for tacit understandings that come from it and can be considered to fall into the constructionist rather than the essentialist framework for thematic analysis which Braun and Clarke state is theoretically consistent, as they emphasise the importance of the matching of the theoretical framework with the methods and that they be appropriate to what the researcher is attempting to investigate.

In the current research, the data corpus consisted of all three reflective journals kept over the period of psychotherapy training, two written by hand and one kept on computer (See appendix 2). Data items consisted of each individual entry in the reflective journals, while data extracts were each individual coded chunk of data which was extracted from the journal entries, before the data
analysis chapter was written up and final themes were constructed. Only a fraction of the data extracts that were coded appear in the data analysis chapter, however more data extracts are presented in the appendices.

Researcher judgement is necessary to determine what constitutes a theme in thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). When determining what counts as a pattern or a theme, in terms of coding, one must question what size a piece of text needs to be and how prevalent it is in the dataset, in order for it to qualify as a theme. While a theme should ideally occur a number times within the data corpus, the ‘keyness’ of a theme is not necessarily dependent on quantifiable measures but more in terms of whether it captures something important in relation to the overall research question. Braun and Clarke (2006) state the importance of deciding whether the analysis is inductive or theoretical to guide decisions around coding themes. An inductive approach to analysis is described as a process of coding the data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame or the researcher’s analytic preconceptions and is therefore considered to be data driven. Theoretical thematic analysis, on the other hand, can be considered to be driven by the researcher’s theoretical or analytic interest and is therefore considered to be explicitly analyst driven. This distinction can be considered more difficult to make in the current study due to the unique nature of this research where the researcher is also the participant and so themes being considered data driven as opposed to analyst driven is somewhat less clear, and potentially less relevant. Within the current study, in my role as participant I was not able to be fully divorced from my role as researcher and therefore my journal entries were potentially seeking to answer the research question even when I was not consciously aware of it. Another distinction that is important to make in thematic analysis is whether the themes that are being identified are semantic or latent and it is claimed that thematic analysis usually focuses exclusively on one level (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The semantic approach is described as focusing on themes where the meaning is relatively explicit and the interpretation occurs on a comparatively surface level, whereas the latent level of analysis goes beyond the semantic content, attempting to identify underlying meanings and conceptualisations that occur in the text. In the current analysis, such a distinction is potentially arbitrary in that, once again,
the delineation between the data and the analyst is ambiguous. While heuristic research by its very nature attempts to unearth tacit, underlying information, to argue that the current research is necessarily a latent analysis is problematic in that when the reflective journals were being written the writer was aware of, and attempting to answer, the research question. Therefore, the work of moving the information from the less conscious processes, out of tacit awareness and into a more cognitive level was sometimes already accomplished in the reflective writing stage. As a result, the current research attempts to function on both the semantic as well as the latent levels of analysis.

**Phase 1: Familiarising oneself with the data**

Braun and Clarke, (2006) state that the process begins when the analyst starts to notice and look for patterns of meaning and issues of potential interest within the data. They say that this may occur during data collection and in terms of the current research this is especially relevant. At the stage of data generation, when the reflective writing was occurring, patterns and areas of potential interest were becoming apparent to me and so it could be argued that the thematic analysis began at this point. Analysis begins at this stage and involves a constant movement back and forth between the entire dataset as well as the specific extracts of data being analysed and the actual analysis of the data itself that is being generated for the study. Familiarising myself with the data therefore began at the stage of producing data. When I began the process of data analysis I was already appreciably familiar with what I was going to examine, and concepts that would later become themes had already begun to take shape. A greater level of familiarisation was achieved through reading and rereading the journals numerous times. At this point, an initial list was made of concepts which continually occurred within the text, as well as those subjects I wrote about with considerable emotion. Emotionally salient themes could be discerned through the language I used when writing, with there being a higher frequency of emotionally expressive terminology, exclamation points, swearing, or simply when the writing literally described my level of emotional arousal at
the time of writing. I also included concepts that felt emotionally salient at the
time of reading, even if the extract didn’t include explicit or implicit references to
my emotional state at the time of writing. Due to the quantity of the data corpus,
the initial list is relatively exhaustive and is presented in the appendices (See
appendix 3).

**Phase 2: Generating initial codes**

After reading and familiarising myself with the data and having generated an
initial list of preliminary themes that occurred within the text, I began to produce
initial codes. Coding involves organising the data into meaningful groups and
identifying features of the extracts that are of interest to the researcher or
provide information in some way about the research question(s). The way the
coding occurs usually differs in terms of whether the study is more 'data-driven'
or 'theory-driven' however as this delineation was not made in the current
research, coding occurred in a way consistent with a 'data-driven' analysis. I
attempted to allow the data to inform the formulation of the codes without trying
to fit the individual data items to the research questions. The reflective journals
had been written with the goal of answering the research questions and so I
was able to allow the coding process to occur outside of a more 'theory-driven'
strategy trusting that all data items could have the potential to help answer the
research questions. At this point, I began making notes on the journals
themselves in different colours and highlighting sections to colour code data
items to make distinctions between codes. Examples of the coding appear in
the appendices (See appendix 4). At this stage of analysis I kept the codes as
indeterminate as possible, attempting not to construct a concrete set of themes
at this point.
Phase 3: Searching for themes

When the data was initially coded, I began the process of creating initial themes from the codes. The codes were sorted into groups that combined to form overarching patterns. This stage widened the analysis out to the broader level of themes, with the codes being used to construct the themes. Thematic maps were constructed to give me a visual representation of the way in which the codes were clustering together to form themes, with some of the codes existing as sub-themes within a theme, while also becoming as a theme in their own right. An example of a thematic map is included in the appendices (See appendix 5) Some codes fitted easily together to form tidy narratives, while others were grouped together with more tenuous links. Because most of the codes fit together into coherent themes, which weaved into an overarching narrative, the ones that were more tenuously linked together were discarded. However these codes were not completely discarded, but were kept, in case they should later prove to be useful in slotting into other themes. A list of the candidate themes is presented in the appendices (See appendix 6).

Phase 4: Reviewing themes

Once a set of candidates themes had been constructed, a refinement of these themes took place. Candidate themes that did not function well as actual themes or did not aid in the production of the coherent account that I was attempting to formulate were discarded. At this point the analysis became more 'theory-driven', rather than being 'data-driven' as it had in the initial stages. This study was an analysis of my process of becoming an integrative psychotherapist and was attempting to make some statement about how I was able to formulate an integrative theory of practice. Because the themes all reflected the tacit awareness which emerged from the process of heuristic inquiry, it was important that all the themes I constructed adhered to this narrative, either by facilitating description of my illumination, or by helping to tell the story of my journey towards it. In this way, the heuristic process served as a guide in constructing more concrete themes, providing an implicit set of inclusion and exclusion criteria for the formulation of themes.
At this point the entire dataset was again reviewed to re-evaluate whether the candidate thematic maps accurately reflected the overall meanings evident in the dataset as a whole. Decisions around what counted as an accurate representation were made in relation to what I believed that I had originally intended the text to reflect at the time of writing, as well as how well the themes were beginning to fit into the superordinate narrative that I was constructing based on tacit knowledge which had been explicated in the illumination stage of the heuristic research. While rereading the entire dataset, additional data was coded within themes that were missed in earlier stages. As a result of my increased familiarity with the dataset, having been the one who produced it, and because this analysis was taking place within the framework of heuristics, where my tacit awareness was guiding the construction of themes, the process of going back and forth between the codes and the data corpus and recoding to fit themes into the wider narrative was easily facilitated in a way that I feel demonstrates the epistemological match between heuristics and thematic analysis that I earlier posit.

Phase 5: Defining and naming themes

At this point, the themes that had been produced were defined further and refined and the names of the themes were finalised. Braun and Clarke (2006) describe this phase as identifying the essence of what each theme is really about, determining what aspect of the data each theme captures and becoming more aware of how themes fit together at a fundamental level to explicate the findings. Braun and Clark (2006) warn against attempting to get a theme to do too much or to be too complex and advises the researcher to focus on organising them into a coherent and internally consistent account, with an accompanying narrative which analyses the content of the themes and links them together. This written analysis off the themes became the data analysis chapter of the current study.
Phase 6: Writing the report

The written analysis that was produced at the end of phase five became the written report that appears in the data analysis chapter of the current study. The objective here was to explicate the complex narrative around my data in a simplified and convincing fashion, displaying the trustworthiness and validity of the method of analysis. I organised the data so as to tell a somewhat chronological story about my journey through my training program and towards an integrative mindset. While each theme contains data items written at different times throughout the journalling process, they are by and large chronological. Each theme attempts to tell a smaller story in and of itself while also feeding into the superordinate narrative of my journey towards integration, which adheres to the classical dramatic structure of initial conflict, rising tension, climax and denouement. The data extracts chosen to be included here were the ones that most vividly captured the essence of the specific theme, whilst not referring to extraneous information or other themes, and the extracts chosen were often examples of the theme that I wrote about with the most intensity and emotion. Braun and Clark (2006) tell us that all aspects of the story presented should cohere around a central idea or concept and in the current research, the central concept is the integrative axiom that came about as a result of the indwelling and reflection from my heuristic process.

Trustworthiness of the research

The trustworthiness and validity of heuristic research, and this particular study, will now be discussed. Green (2000) describes validity as a process which gives an accurate representation of the phenomenon being researched (Green, 2000). Moustakas says that “the question of validity is one of meaning” (Moustakas, 1990, p.32), inferring that once the findings of the research are
meaningful, and indeed, meaningfully described, the research satisfies the requirements of validity. Martin (2002) argues heuristics to be such a subjective process that validation must depend on the thoroughness of investigation and the authenticity and clarity with which it is presented (Martin, 2002). Bridgeman (1950) states validity in qualitative research to involve “continual apprehension of meaning, a constant appraisal of significance [and] a running act of checking to be sure that I’m doing what I want to do, and of judging correctness and incorrectness” (Bridgeman, 1950, p.50). He says that this can be done by the researcher alone. The trustworthiness of heuristic inquiry comes from the researcher continuously returning to the data and appraising and re-appraising the significance of each emerging meaning. Polanyi (1969) says of this continuous re-evaluation that certain visions of truth, having made their appearance, continue to gain strength both by further reflection and additional evidence. It is in this continual re-emergence of themes where validity lies (Polanyi, 1969). In the current research, the amount of data produced was so vast, that many of the themes that were included had emerged several dozen times within the text.

Jasper (2005) talks of the trustworthiness of reflective writing stating that, for external audit, there should be clear indications of procedural steps, a transparency of process and a recognition of the subjective role of the researcher (Jasper, 2005). While many of the themes that are described in the findings section of the current research are included due to frequency of appearance, it must also be acknowledged that as the researcher is also the participant, the inclusion of themes also has a subjective component. Some themes were included because the researcher believed them to be important. The use of the self in research must here be extolled rather than defended, as in this situation, more than, perhaps any other research scenario, the researcher can be certain of what part of what the participant was saying was important to the participant and therefore where validity truly lies.

The current research adhered to Jasper's (2005) guidelines, acknowledging Koch's (1996) assertion that the responsibility lies with the researcher to show the way in which a study attempts to address rigour (Koch, 1996) and that as long as each step of the process is described in detail, it can be examined for
validity. DeVault argues this type of research to provide “smaller, more tailored, and more intensely pointed truths than the discredited ‘Truth’ of grand theory and master narratives. They are “truths that illuminate varied experiences rather than insist on one reality ” (DeVault, 1999 p.3). However these tailored, specific truths can be expanded upon to become wider reaching theories. This is a key component of doctoral research, with the onus placed on the researcher to demonstrate it’s unique contribution to knowledge. Schroeder (2007) discusses the process of the generalisability of first-person research saying that “while it is true that an experiential theory starts out being about just one person’s experience, it does not necessarily have to stay that way. Once a first person theory has been formulated, it can be communicated, so that other people can apply it to their own experience”, and through discussion around this and modification of these theories with other professionals, something can happen “which transcends and broadens the perspective of the individual researcher” (Schroeder, 2007 p.248).

In the current research, validity is demonstrated through the utilising and describing of the specific steps of thematic analysis as laid out by Braun and Clarke (2006) to code the data in a manner that is easily replicable. In the appendices I have included photographic evidence of the journals themselves (see appendix 2), the list of initial themes (see appendix 3), examples of the coding process (see appendix 4), a thematic map (see appendix 5) and the list of candidate themes that went on to become the themes presented in the data analysis chapter (see appendix 6). By giving an accurate representation of the process I undertook in analysing the data, and by meaningfully describing the research protocols within the methodology chapter as well as authentically discussing the findings in the data analysis chapter, this study can be argued to adhere to standards of trustworthiness set out by Green (2000), Moustakas (1990) and Martin (2002). Adhering to the protocols set out by Braun and Clarke (2006) a constant reappraisal of significance and re-immersion in the data was facilitated. In this way, the phenomena under investigation continued to gain strength through further reflecting and finding additional evidence within the data corpus as discussed by Polanyi (1969). Utilising thematic analysis in the broader framework of the heuristic process meant that I could demonstrate the
clear indications of procedural steps and the transparency of process that Jasper (2005) asserts are necessary. What I believe is the true demonstration of trustworthiness and validity in my research however is the authenticity and congruence with which I engaged in the process and reported the findings.

**Ethical considerations**

This research project adhered to the ethical guidelines set down by the British Psychological Society in Ethical Principles for Conducting Research with Human Participants (BPS, 2011) and the Ethical Standards of the Health Professionals Council (HPC, 2007) and was approved by the University of Manchester Ethics Committee.

**Confidentiality and data storage**

The ethical considerations of this study were, however, somewhat atypical. While the main participant was myself, the discussion of my process of becoming an integrative practitioner involved, by necessity, reflections about my clients, colleagues, friends and family. In undertaking this process I took care to ensure anonymity when recording my thoughts and reflections. Pseudonyms were used consistently throughout the process of journaling and no entries which spoke specifically about clients or significant others in my life were included in the thesis. When contracting at the beginning of therapy, all clients were informed that reflections on my own personal process of our therapeutic interaction may be included in my doctoral research, however it was made clear that the reflections would be solely focused on my own personal learning and development and not on any of the specifics of our sessions. West (2002) discusses the importance of process consent over informed consent, and the idea that upon commencing therapy, patients may not have sufficient awareness of what psychotherapy entails to truly consent to all possible future eventualities. Therefore, the contracting process was revisited throughout therapy with patients who featured more substantially in the journaling process, and they were once again made aware of their peripheral involvement in the
research.

The collected data, the reflective journals, which were anatomised from the outset, were stored securely and confidentially in my home for the duration of the research. One of the reflective journals was comprised of electronic notes taken during training seminars and lectures and was stored on a password protected laptop, along with additional information and patient notes, in compliance with the regulations of the organisations where I completed my clinical practice placements. When quoting or referring to the journal, in this study, identifying information regarding people written about in the journals has been further anonymised. These safeguards are in compliance with the University of Manchester regulations on data protection.

**Self care**

Self-care was also an important ethical consideration, as research suggests that the process of training as a therapist can be psychologically damaging (Corey, Corey and Callanan, 1993). Martin (2002), in his critique of heuristics, discusses the possible re-traumatisation that can occur as a result of a researcher immersing themselves so fully in the process of solving a problem with which they are so emotionally involved. However, strategies were put in place to attempt to protect against such occurrences. While Etherington says that self-understanding and self-growth occur simultaneously in heuristic discovery (Etherington, 2004b), it was kept in mind that the purpose of this study was not personal therapy. As a component of my training, I was required to undergo personal therapy and, while reflections on this appeared in my journal and while self-searching is an inevitable part of the research process, the intention was to keep the research process separate from the personal therapy component of the programme. Sela-Smith argues that Moustakas original conception of the heuristic method shies away from the deep level of self-searching required to truly elucidate tacit knowledge (Sela-Smith, 2002). However, it is my contention that Moustakas methodology is sufficient, and that the primary goal of this research was learning about learning from a personal perspective, and
elucidating some personal truth about psychotherapy for facilitate my learning and it was not intended to exclusively be an exercise in self-discovery.

**Consent form and statement of intent**

In order for the research to be approved by the University of Manchester Ethics Committee it was necessary to create a consent form and statement of intent for myself (see Appendix 1). This somewhat atypical procedure can be argued to mirror the unconventional nature of the research itself. It highlighted the dual role I played as the participant and researcher in the study, as well as the necessity to make a clear delineation between these roles. In order to facilitate this process, the document was created as a means of informing myself, in clearer, more concrete terms, of the nature of my research, in order to obtain formal consent from myself. The document functioned as a statement of intent, to formalise the processes that was to be undertaken in my research, to fully outline the potential risks and to officially consent to the process. The document laid out the aim of the research, the research method used, what my participation will entail, what will constitute the data, and how it will be kept in a confidential manner. Also discussed in this document was the duration and location of the research and the future publication possibilities. Once I had clearly outlined the research process, I read through the consent form and statement of intent before signing. It was intended to function as a clear reminder to myself what the research will involve as well as a means of me officially consenting to this potentially emotionally taxing process.

The consent form also dealt with how the 'opting out' process would function in the current research, in the event that I choose to remove myself, as the participant, from the research. The form stated that participation in the research was voluntary, but addressed the unusual ethical concerns of the current research, given that the participant is also the researcher, and therefore benefits from participation.

In most consent forms, it is stated that participants may withdraw at any time
and that this decision would have no negative consequences for them. This was not the case in the current research, however and so it was necessary to state my own awareness of this issue, and to declare that I enter into the research process with full knowledge, that using my own reflective journal as data means that my own withdrawal from the research would result in my not completing the professional doctorate qualification. I also confirmed that upon entering into this form of research, I understood that conducting research on oneself was not a compulsory part of the Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology at the University of Manchester, and that undertaking such a research project was entirely my own choice.

I also stated my awareness that, if I so choose, I may remove myself from the research and not complete the Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology, should this be what I deem to be most advantageous for my emotional well-being. In the unlikely event that I chose to withdraw I would take full responsibility for the ramifications.

**Conclusion**

This chapter looked at heuristic inquiry in terms of it's philosophical positioning and its appropriateness for the analysis of the researcher's reflective journal, as well as positioning reflective journaling in the research.

This section discussed the initial engagement of the researcher with psychotherapy. The research objective is to understand the meaning of the ambiguous nature of integrative psychotherapy, and the journey trainees take, as well as to analyse the utility of heuristics for making sense of this undertaking. How immersion, incubation and illumination explication and creative synthesis occurred in this study is then discussed and an explanation of the use of thematic analysis within a heuristic framework is given.

Ethics are discussed in relation to confidentiality, data storage and self-care. The specific role of the unique consent form and statement of intent document that was drafted for this research is explained.
Chapter 4: Analysis of Data

Introduction
In previous chapters the literature regarding therapist training and reflective writing for personal and professional development was looked at and the research methodology and how it would be applied in the current study was explained.

In this data analysis chapter, the themes that manifested from the analysis of the reflective journal are examined, with excerpts analysed and discussed. In this section excerpts are linked to one another thematically and examined in relation to the research question. Due to the unique nature of the current research, I discuss my reactions to my reflective writing and elaborate on some of the meanings that the excerpts were intending to capture.

The analytical writing in this chapter represents my role as researcher, while the italicised excerpts reflect the part of me that was the participant in the study. The style of writing in this chapter is colloquial and discursive to represent in a transparent manner my process of my thematic analysis. The creative synthesis that manifested from the research is presented at the end of this chapter.

Themes

The themes produced in the current research fell into categories of the two super-ordinate themes of

- Personal development and
- Professional development.
The themes that emerged are as follows:

1) Personal development: Trainee anxiety
2) Personal development: Overcoming procrastination and boredom anxiety
3) Professional Development: Making sense of theoretical ambiguity
4) Professional Development: Searching for a needle of truth in a postmodern haystack
5) Professional Development: Axiomatic ‘truth’ as a means of facilitating integration
6) Professional Development: The practical application of illumination

**Personal development:**

One might ask why I should want to include so much about my own personal development in a process that is essentially about my professional development, to which I would respond that part of the remit of this research is about the potential utility of journaling and heuristic analysis for managing the personal development aspects of therapy training programs, which are perhaps overlooked. Regardless of that however, were the project only dealing with the formulation of a theory of practice, I should still want to include some of the more personal entries that went into my reflective journal, in order to, as Rogers said, “share with you more fully some of the excitement and discouragement of this effort to understand process” (Rogers, 1961, p. 129).

**Personal development: Trainee anxiety**

It is perhaps not surprising that this was one of the most frequently occurring themes that come up in my reflective journal. In the research that has come before, on the topic of therapy training, it has been a consistent theme among research participants (Lowndes & Hanley, 2010; Turner, Gibson, Bennetts & Hunt, 2008; Blazek, 2010). In her heuristics thesis analysing her own process of
becoming a therapist, Blazek (2010) discusses this inevitability. She writes about the stresses of being a novice therapist as being highly typical, yet feeling completely unique. She wrote of her graduate program instructors warning them, in specific detail, of the anxieties and tensions that were inevitably going to come their way, but how she had an expectation that her own experience was in some way going to be completely unique and potentially meaningful (Blazek, 2010). I must admit to having shared this experience. As much as I was informed by supervisors and by the research that trainee anxiety is a normal and expected part of training, this did not stop me from pouring hours of my life into reflecting on the feelings of inadequacy that accompany the process of learning to do such a strange job.

Something which came up repeatedly for me was the idea of losing my identity to the caring, benign cliché of a humanistic therapist. I wanted to be able to express my compassion and integrity as a therapist, while also maintaining my fallible person-hood. I felt the need to explore the fact that while I cared deeply about my clients, and was devoted to the process of learning to help them as best as I could, I also wanted to acknowledge the parts of me that were selfish and rude and irreverent. It makes me think of what Rogers wrote about his means of generating his own approach, when he decided to use himself as the tool (Rogers, 1961), and he said, “as a tool, I have qualities both good and bad” (Rogers, 1961 p. 128).

11/11/10:
I hate being a therapist sometimes. I feel boring. I feel like a people pleaser. I feel a little bit like I'm being inauthentic. Not with clients, but with...I dunno, everyone else? I'm sick of this "oh-my-God-I-care-so-fucking-much-about-everyone" thing that seems to have attached itself to my personality and won't let go. Why do I need to be that person to everyone? Why do I always need to be the helper? Seriously, why? Do I completely put all of my self-worth into the fact that people see me as someone who can help them with their shit? Why is that so important to me, anyway? Am I actually a completely selfish bastard and this is a Freudian reaction formation because I'm uncomfortable with the fact that I'm actually only motivated by selfishness?
This apparent inconsistency was something that I often grappled with, and while I found comfort in Rogers (1961) discussion of the importance of congruence and in the general focus that therapy training has on the therapist's self-awareness, sometimes the oscillating between these two extremes seemed difficult for me to integrate within myself. These types of entries were balanced with others that told the story of my anxiety about being good enough to do this job that I saw as important.

27/03/11:
I'm so stressed about placement. It's a huge responsibility, to be given these clients, with these cases. I'm constantly afraid...trying to expand my knowledge and preparing for what might come up. It's exciting but it's also very stressful. It's going really well so far...but I'm constantly afraid I'm going to fuck up.

My anxieties also frequently manifested in the feeling that I was an imposter, in-congruently faking my way through sessions, pretending to be a competent therapist, when I did not feel this way. This was particularly difficult due to the fact that I valued the idea of being genuine in the therapeutic relationship.

28/03/11:
This is fucking pressure, this job. These clients are being referred to the psychology service...to see like, an actual psychologist. A fully qualified clinician. And they get me. An imposter. I go in and I smile and I nod and I pretend that I know what I'm doing. I let them cry and I like, 'hold their pain' or whatever, but inside I'm thinking that I don't have a fucking clue what I'm doing. On the up-side my winging it and total fakeness seems to be working though...so much for the utility of congruence...

While the compassionate side of myself, the part of me so concerned with my work being beneficent, came up in my writing continually, the shadow side of my desire to do good and be good at doing good also manifested itself frequently. In one entry I talked in depth about resentment I felt towards a patient who was not improving quickly enough to soothe my trainee anxieties.

15/08/11:
I don't know why I sort of don't look forward to sessions with her. She's miserable about her life and that bums me out, and then I don't look forward to sessions, which makes me feel guilty...

This was something that I looked at continuously, in my writings as well as in supervision. If caring deeply about the client was a mainstay of my work, then if the caring didn't have an effect soon enough, it challenged my opinions on whether the core conditions were necessary and sufficient, which led to my inability to consistently provide them. Because I was carrying out my research on my process as a therapist, it meant that, on some level, each therapy session was a part of my experiment, and so I wanted there to be certain outcomes. Sometimes I wanted my work to be helpful to prove to myself that I was a good therapist, sometimes I wanted it to work to prove to myself that my burgeoning psychotherapy philosophy was correct, and that humanistic counselling psychology can be defended, and sometimes I just wanted it to work because I cared. Either way, I was having lots of desire about the outcome of therapy, while trying to manage my ability to just allow the sessions to be what they needed to be. I was attempting to manage the idea of allowing therapy to be agenda-less, whilst still having a very definite agenda about the patient feeling better.

16/08/11:
Okay, so I'm having some of those 'feelings' that I hear so much about. It is after having seen cients today. It was some of the stuff that Dora said today. She talked about having gotten more depressed over the last few months, (though she stated this to be a direct result of her rapidly diminishing finances) and that made me feel like a bit of a shit therapist. It made me feel like we were getting nowhere, and there is so much pressure about the time-limit thing in [this placement setting]. She also spoke about another therapist that she had seen previously who was "really nice" (I made a face when I wrote that), with whom she experienced some meaningful therapeutic change. She did some adult learning courses while seeing this therapist and got five certificates. Five! Not three or four...but five fucking certificates! She hasn't gotten any certificates since she's been seeing me! Obviously this therapist that she was seeing was warm and caring and extremely competent and I would like to punch him in the face! She's my client and I
care about her. I want to help her and, embarrassingly enough, I not only want her to get better, but I want it to be because of me.

In this last entry, I express genuine emotion around the discomfort of being a trainee therapist, which is an exemplar of what a lot of my writings focused on, however I also used some self-soothing strategies to buffer the anxiety I was feeling. I wrote about my feelings of stress and anxiety, using humour as a way to ease these emotions as well as defending my practice to myself by not completely overlooking the extra-therapeutic factors which the patient pointed out, for which she claimed her therapeutic relapse to have come. While I was, in fact, experiencing jealousy at the competence that I perceived the more qualified therapist to have had, I wrote about this with humour which I think, to some degree diffused my anxieties. This might have a potential utility for anyone thinking about utilising journaling as a learning tool. This exists in contrast to other instances, when I was less able to manage self-esteem maintaining conversation to be humorous, and I just used my reflective journal as a place to totally ‘freak out’.

19/09/11:
Fuck, fuck, fuck. What the hell is this therapy thing all about anyway? Today was shit. I was exhausted from having spent the whole weekend preparing stuff for therapy. All I was doing was thinking and writing and talking about therapy. And then I go today and it becomes glaringly obvious that I haven't actually got a famous clue what I'm doing. That's right I don't have a bloody clue. I am winging it. I am a charlatan. I am pretending to be confident about totally fucking with the mental health of these poor people. What am I doing? I know that I can establish these kinda cool, interesting, hopefully trusting, relationships with my clients but what else can I do? Like nothing. Literally. Do I actually know any techniques? I talk shit about CBT all the time but is it just a defense because I can’t do any of it? I try these techniques but they don’t work! Today, I hate being a therapist.
Personal development: Procrastination and boredom anxiety

Procrastination and boredom anxiety were recurrent themes in my journal, and were some of the main issues that I discussed in my personal therapy, throughout the training program. Overcoming procrastination, and my anxieties about boredom and later anxieties about producing something of doctoral standard was something with which I was grappling with throughout my time as a trainee.

I spoke about a need to keep my life interesting, which led to my output of work increasing exponentially as my deadline got closer. While this satisfied my anxieties around boredom, it replaced it with an anxiety about actually being able to get my work completed. My process, I found, very much echoed a Schopenhauer quote that is favoured by Yalom about life swinging like a pendulum backward and forward between boredom and pain (Yalom, 2005). I spoke of almost having a need to maintain this swinging pendulum in my life. Or perhaps, to at least to acknowledge that this was what I wanted my life to be about.

28/03/12:
Why did I have to write so many thousands of words on the night before my masters dissertation was due in? I got to live on the edge. I got the excitement and contrast that I crave - and that is huge for me. I could keep my life from getting boring. Is that why I do what I do? I can let the stress and mess accumulate and then I love getting everything organised and sorted and done and accomplished. And it's exciting and intense. The contrast between extremes exhilarates me.

In that entry I was defending and exploring my need to keep life from getting boring, whereas, in another entry, I tried to reconcile my other, perhaps more intense anxiety of my life feeling empty if I was not in the process of accomplishing something.

05/04/10:
For now I can just languish in the not so unpleasant feeling of not having a goal, or any
motivation because the contrast between this feeling and the inevitable stimulation from my next ambitious objective will be exciting...

Upon analysing my journal, this theme continuously presented itself.

06/04/10:
Contrast and excitement and newness are, I'm realising more and more, what I ultimately always need. In every aspect of my life.

In this entry I discuss it slightly more philosophically:

16/05/10:
There is something I really like about life being like this. It feels busy. Maybe hectic? Maybe like things are in flux. Not all stood still, clean and simple. Maybe this is a little more chaotic, more complex? Maybe it's more interesting than tidy organisation? A little less boring, perhaps? More crazy? I crave that. We hate nothing more than cognitive under load, right?

There was something here about realness, and knowing that that is what life is really all about. It echoes the discomfort I sometimes feel when patients feel that their life is out of control and what they want to initially focus on is bringing order to their lives and scheduling their behaviours. In these situations I get the feeling that therapy is not being real for them, because I cannot, in good conscience allow them to leave therapy thinking that all of life's hardships can be managed or scheduled or overcome through obsessive planning. The really big stuff, the deep, dark motivations that bring people to that chair, are one's that need to be accepted, not overcome.

I sometimes refer to it as an epiphany, even after I have written about it numerous times. In this entry I discuss it in a different way that I had before. In the previous entry it was about accepting it as part of real life, whereas in this entry I talk about it more as if 'real life' is a social construct to which I may or may not necessarily want to conform, and that my desires are to be listened to and acknowledged. This, again, sits with my therapeutic philosophy. Here, I once more discuss this with a certain degree of humour and irreverence.
06/06/10:
I'm having something of an epiphany about myself. That's right, an epiphany! I realise more and more that I crave contrast. I realise more and more that I acutely resent any attempts made on me to impose structure in my life. Structure and routine are just not things for me. Sorry, real-life, I'm going to have to reject you and all of the things that come with you. Spontaneity is for me! Impulsivity is for me! Passion and excitement and newness. These things make my heart beat faster. These things inspire. All too often we (and by we I mean I) believe that if a little of something makes us feel nice, then we should continue to do it ad fucking nausium, until we are so fucking bored of the thing that we once found beautiful, that our minds and bodies and souls are fucking numb.

This entry also foreshadows a debate that I consistently have with myself within the pages of my journal, about, not just whether there can be an objective truth in the philosophical, postmodern sense, but also about this tension in a more subjective manner. I often spoke about the idea that any therapeutic intervention, like anything that makes us happy, has the capacity to be useful at first, before the person becomes habituated to the pleasurable stimulus. This echoes John Stuart Mills idea's on the paradox of hedonism (1893) and Martin Seligmans work on Positive Psychology (2002), and posits this idea that it is not just about there being various truths in some kind of objective, knowable way, but that on some, more subjective level, there needs to be different truths because humans get bored pondering the same truth consistently. I think that I, at various points argue the fact that the truth of there being no objective truth is even an unknowable truth. However, later in my journal I completely reject this idea...

05/05/12:
Okay, confession time: I'm not a Post-modernist. I want to be one, because it sounds so cool. It's something I want to say that I am when I meet people at parties. I want to have bohemian discussions about how there is no objective truth and how I love low-art meeting high-art and appreciating the work that refers to itself in a self-aware manner. I do...but I also want truth. I want to say goodbye to the anxiety that comes with not only not knowing what the truth is, but also the idea of looking for a truth when one doesn't really exist.
This entry foreshadows a theme that appears later, the search for truth. I continued to analyse my procrastination habits throughout my writings sometimes believing it to be a desire for change other times it was a desire for control. I read exhaustively on the matter, and as aware as I was that this was another method of procrastinating, it was also a deeply enjoyable experience.

**10/01/11:**
This book [on procrastination] is good. Not great. It's relevance to my pathological mental health issue is what has me so enamoured with it, rather than its insightful writing or its beautiful prose. It calls procrastination what it is - a scourge on mankind. It's true though, it literally destroys lives and I'm glad that this book states it so perniciously.

This also led to various plans and strategies which with various levels of effectiveness.

**11/01/11:**
In order to overcome procrastination, I need to make life more fun, and more exciting and make the life I'm living more pleasant. Like a CBT exercise or a something. I have to make the idea of doing it enticing and pleasant, so that I want to do it. Time for some behavioural activation, then...

This certainly taught me something about the utility of philosophically modest action plans. After various experiments, I related it back to the philosophy of therapy, trying to answer a bigger question...

**26/10/11:**
I need to allow myself to have new experiences. I need change. Badly. Variety. Flux. Fluidity. Keeping busy, and seeing new places. Depression comes from boredom not sadness.

And, of course everything is an attempt to answer the fundamental questions...

**09/01/12:**
They say that nature abhors a vacuum and it's true. Even with clients today, I was thinking that sometimes we feel stressed and depressed and anxious because we have time to. Maybe, when we feel down, life is just boring. Maybe it's as simple as asking - "how can life be more fun"?

It became a consistency in my journaling, that when I would start to write about my desire to overcome what I called procrastination, it would inevitably lead me to writing about a fear of boredom, which lead to a discussion on a variety therapeutic approaches and multiple truths.

08/10/12:
I am experiencing a sadness brought about by the very soul destroying knowledge that I am bored. Bored out of my frickin’ mind. Bored to death. Existentially bored. Unchallenged. Unmotivated. Bored out of my fucking head.

I went from being stressed and burned out and just wanting to get out of working in [my placement], and getting my assignments done to being so so bored. I am literally bored of every single part of my life right now. Every single little part of it. My relationship (it’s not her fault at all), my friendships (nor theirs), my house, my course, my assignments, therapy, Manchester. The food I eat. The places I go drinking. The people I go there with. I am bored of the TV shows I watch. I am bored of my dreadlocks and of my clothes. Am I kinda bored of being me? Do I seriously need to change things up? Yes, definitely...perhaps...but how? Or do I just need to spend some time totally on my own...

As I continued to pontificate on my so called, procrastination, I realised something that I had already known. I wasn't really procrastinating. I always got the work that I needed to do done, and in fact often I was reading more around the subject than many of my peers. I was just not accepting myself and the way that I worked. I was stressing about what I would produce or when I would produce it, rather than accepting myself the way I am, with a perfectly functional style of working (okay, maybe not perfectly functional). Talking about how much I procrastinated became a way that I could stop being too nice to myself, and make it seem like it wasn't easy for me. Funnily enough, when I began to start accepting myself for doing this, it reduced my anxiety around what I would
produce, which made me more able to fully engage with what I was writing.

**Professional development**

Just as my journal had been used to explore the process of personal development and how I dealt with being a student and a friend and a boyfriend and a son, the central role of the journal was to explore my professional self as a therapist.

**Professional development: Making sense of theoretical ambiguity**

Another unsurprising theme that manifested in the current study was: “Making Sense of Theoretical Ambiguity”. My training program was an integrative one, with one of the primary goals, if not, the primary goal of the entire experience being the formulation of a theory of practice and a means of integrating psychotherapy techniques and ideas together. Therefore, it is somewhat predictable that making sense of the competing theories within psychotherapy would make its way into (or indeed dominate) my reflective journal. I consistently used my reflective journal as a place to make sense of these intellectual debates, and several sub-themes came up consistently. I have included examples of some of these, however, for each quote included, many more were omitted. The ideas that kept coming up are represented here.

Perhaps the most consistent theme to re-occur in my writings around tolerating theoretical ambiguity was that of being directive and predating a constructivist view of the world within a humanistic framework. Being on a program that emphasized pluralistic integration within a humanistic, Counselling Psychology framework, I gravitated initially towards the politically liberal philosophies of the Carl Rogers, and his Person-Centred Therapy with its almost charismatic, gregarious quality. I was far from the first trainee therapist to ever have been enticed by the egalitarian charms of the approach. What was there for a trainee not to like? It was about facilitating clients to get in touch with their feelings and to formulate their own solutions to their problems, without the therapist imposing their own world view. I had had experience of Rogers philosophy on my counselling certificate prior to my enrolment on the doctorate, but it was a skills
based training that did not provide the same level of in-depth theoretical examination that doctoral level study facilitated.

It became the base from which I chose to integrate. That was less than an easy task, however, as what kept coming up in my journaling was, whether it is possible to be just a little bit person-centred? This also facilitated a negative association with approaches that could, from the perspective of a humanistic philosophy, be seen as imposing and directive. So, when these idealistic, egalitarian principles, the lens through which I was viewing the world and therapy, were challenged, this was anxiety provoking.

27/06/11:
So I'm having a crisis of Person-Centred faith. I'm scared that I might be becoming CBT. A client asked me for more guidance today, and said that he regretted some of the deep stuff that had come out in previous sessions. He said that sometimes he becomes uncomfortable when I don't speak for a while.

Later...
And with another client, the relationship is developing very well, after some initial hiccups...We had psycho-dynamic issues and they were resolved using CBT. That's it Rogers, I'm done with you, forever! (I don't want to be held to that). Okay so I feel good that I'm growing and learning and all that but it's weird that the thing that I was evangelical about this morning is not the thing that worked this afternoon...

The discussions that I was having with myself were about utility and not just philosophy. When I was finding that certain approaches were working consistently, with different clients, I was experiencing this as a kind of micro-empiricism, (which I suppose is something of an oxy-moron), but which I expect every therapist engages in on a conscious, or unconscious level. But, while engaging in this experimentation, I was feeling anxiety around how to define my practice theoretically and how to refer to the way in which I was working and how to label myself as a practitioner.

10/07/11:
I guess I'm calling myself kind of "humanistic, relational with psychodynamic
interventions" at the moment...I guess. I know that I am working in the relationship. Working in the relationship works. I mean, it really works. It's kind of what therapy is all about. The research says that training doesn't make that much of a difference to therapists’ performance. Isn't that funny?

As my journaling continued, integration became an obsession for me.

11/09/11:
What is this thing called integration? What is the thing that I'm thinking about all the time? How can I keep looking at this and looking at this? I'm not like other people studying this. I am not loyal to a school. I jump from one therapy to the next...all of them being my great love for a short time. Then I return to Person-Centred. Consistently.

How can I agree with all of these approaches to some degree? I see them the same way I see my clients actually. I appreciate all my clients for different reasons and in different ways. This is a useful link because all the different clients create their own integrative model. Maybe they are the integrationists not me. Maybe they create the therapy. I just need to be aware of the various therapeutic approaches so I can facilitate their integration. They are like what Anna O was to Freud. I just allow them to do it. They take me along for the ride. Is my job to just appreciate them and their journey? Person-Centred integration. Cool. Done. Dusted. Problem solved. Case closed. End of reflective journal...I wish...

When I look back on my reflections I hate my use of the word journey. I now feel that it implies a lack of scientific, empirical thinking which I think is fundamental to both counselling psychology and heuristic research.

My relationship with Person-Centred Therapy was another recurring theme. Rogerian philosophy started out, for me, representing, the political values of humanism that counselling psychology espoused. As I continued to explore the way in which I related to the ideology, I came to view its focus on non-directive therapeutic skills and egalitarian interventions (which I viewed as almost behavioural in nature) as being distinct from its focus on the therapeutic relationship and its orientation towards emotions. In the following entry I am discussing Rogerian ideas in terms of their non-directive facilitation, but end up discussing them in terms of the creation of relationship. This parallels my overall
development.

04/10/11
I was a bit solution focused yesterday and Person-Centred. Can you be a little bit Person-Centred? I mean, is it like being pregnant? Maybe I did what I do best. I gave a crap. Really well.

Confusion would often manifest as the realisation that in fact, it is not always about the same thing. Psychotherapy, it appeared to me, was becoming about different things at different times. Could I be a technical eclecticist, utilising different skills and techniques at different times depending on what the situation appeared to call for, with little regard for philosophical underpinnings? Would that be enough?

02/01/12:
I'm sitting here on the beach. I've just had an argument with my family. And the overwhelming, overarching feeling or thought that I'm having is that everything is impermanent, everything changes, everything passes. What feels good now, sitting here on the rocks by the sea, in the sun, writing in my journal - it's not the same as what I needed last night when I went night swimming. It's not about knowing what's always right, what the underlying constant or the solution really is. No - it's about being open and deciding and really feeling what the best thing is for right now. The solution will always be different. It won't even always be Buddhist or Zen, despite my current focus on impermanence. It won't consistently adhere to one psychological theory. It will be something that we can feel our way into if we are open enough to do it...

Sometimes it was challenging to believe in the humanistic philosophies of counselling psychology. That they were ethically correct, and that they did work on the level of pragmatism, especially having experienced them as having worked, while on the other hand, sometimes feeling as if the whole thing would be easier if I could just abandon high minded notions such as client agency and autonomy, and just sort these people out ASAP.

20/02/12:
I wish I was CBT. There, I said it. I wish this for a number of reasons. Mainly, I wish
that I knew what the fuck I was doing sometimes. I wish I knew how far along in the process we were or whether we have achieved the objectives we set out to achieve. This is stressful. I do a job that I don't understand. I practice something that I can't define. I can't tell people at cocktail parties about what it is that I do...you know, if I was the kind of person who went to cocktail parties. I want to be CBT, just for today. I want to have structure I want to know where I am and I want to be able to define what is happening while it is happening. But that is not what happens and that is not real life and that is not therapy...but just for today I wish it was.

My relationship, with the more directive, objectivist, process oriented approaches to psychotherapy deteriorated as my learning continued. Because of their philosophically competing ideologies, I began to see CBT as the antithesis to counselling psychology.

05/03/12:
I'm afraid I'm going to end up being CBT. Is this what happens with counselling psychologists? Do they mess around with Person-Centred Therapy as novices, before eventually settling down to CBT? Because 'it works'. Is it like what they say about all young liberals becoming middle aged conservatives? Am I going to grow up to be a Tory? I think it's become glaringly obvious that any therapist can frame any intervention as anything, which makes discussion and defining interventions in particular ways seem pointless, sometimes, but today, when I just trusted my gut in the session, I was extremely, alarmingly CBT. Is this what it feels like to have a Ridley Scott type alien in your stomach, about to burst forth and kill everyone on the ship? Why do I talk about CBT like this? Why am I so uncomfortable with being directive, with telling people what to do? Is it really because I disagree with this on principle or is it not that I am afraid that I'm telling someone what to do, but that I'm afraid I'm telling someone to do the wrong thing? Is this CBT hatred just trainee anxiety?

Whenever I was beginning to come around to the cognitive behavioural approaches, it would never last very long. There was always something missing on a philosophical level, in terms of how integration could occur.

14/05/12:
And so I go back to Rogers. Again. It appeals to me on a number of levels. A lecturer
once said to us that we should find the theory that sings to us. Well Person-Centred theory belts out a ballad in my general direction. I'm Simon Cowell and it's through to the next round...

My frustration with integrating on a theoretical level consumed me...

21/06/12
Integration is bullshit. It is total nonsense. I began the doctorate as, I think, a technical eclectasist, or perhaps a pluralist. Then I thought that I could be an assimilative integrationist. Pluralism seemed too chaotic. It seemed to me like it was saying that actually, anything goes. No theory or philosophy. Assimilative integration annoys me in a different, possibly deeper way. It is fundamentally inconsistent and therefore, potentially flawed on a structural level. What I am interested in now is the common factors, and what therapy is really all about, fundamentally. If therapy is effective, then it must be something that happens with every approach. It must be something to do with the fact that two people are sitting in the room.

The lack of ease with which I felt that I could integrate theories began to take the form of a battle going on in my head. A number of my entries talked about this battle explicitly.

The War of Integration:
Captains Log - Stardate: 20/06/11
That's how it felt today. It felt like a battle. Between good and evil. Between the side of light and an army of darkness. Unfortunately, the dark side, today took the form of [my placement setting]. It felt like their insidiousness had never been stronger than it was today. It felt like they are the Shadows, or the Borg or the Imperial Empire. [Various science fiction enemy alien races ].

The war between the Humanists, the Psychodynamics and the CBT is raging across the galaxy. The CBT has gained much ground in past years, since becoming the strongest side. In the beginning there was the Psychodynamics. They roamed the galaxy, unfettered, doing whatever they pleased, with no one to challenge them. What was great power, wielded by a few special chosen ones was never disputed. Until the CBT's. They came from out of nowhere. They had a very different view of the universe. Instead of
exploring the stars in great, extensive detail, they mapped the cosmos in a vast and superficial manner. They took the power away from the Psychodynamics by using new technology that the dynamics had never even fathomed. This war between these two great powers raged on for millennia. Neither side conceding, neither wanting to lose the power that they had gained. Each drew their power from a different source.

Then came the Humanists. Born out of conflict between the others, they had no desire to conquer them. Theirs was just to exist. But they were not allowed to merely exist. They were drawn into the war. A peaceful people, the Humanists did not take quickly or happily to battle. But they took to it well. They fought the way that they did everything else. With great thought and emotion. When they were forced to defend their right to live and to be who they are, they did so.

**Professional development: Searching for a needle of truth in a postmodern haystack**

My struggles with theoretical consistency developed into a desire to find a unifying theory of practice which could encompass all aspects of psychotherapy. This search for a truth moved away from a focus on postmodernism towards a more positivist view, and the idea that underneath the multiple truths I was struggling with was some underlying truth that would emerge, given enough exploration. This was conceptualised as a ceasefire in the battle, in a passage that I wrote a few days after the previous entry.

22/06/11:

**Ceasefire:**

The war of integration is over. I had supervision yesterday. It was good. I need to talk about what he said about me using what I “recognised as being Person-Centred”, so it was quite like what I wrote about in my thesis proposal. He kind of said that whatever we are doing is just therapy. And therapy is therapy.
Then I read some Rogers on the way home. It was great. He talked about the goals of therapy and that no matter what the clients are saying in therapy, what is actually going on is always the same. The client is trying to find out how they can become themselves. It was brilliantly written. Rogers is great. But it’s the same kind of thing that Freud would write. That we have to get in touch with our unconscious, and overcome the socialisation of the ego and the superego. Ellis would argue that we need to overcome the belief systems that have come about through culture and society, and reach unconditional self-acceptance. So we’re all doing the same thing. That’s good. The war is over, and peace reigns across the galaxy.

In many ways, that is just what this project was all about, bringing about a ceasefire, to the war of integration that was going on in my head for three years. It seemed that all the great thinkers were striving for this unification, or that they didn’t really acknowledge a need for integration, because there was a deeper truth which, once known, automatically facilitated it. I recalled an interview I had watched with Jon Kabat-Zinn talking about his personal journey to mindfulness. He speaks about his childhood, and his father being a professor at the medical school at Columbia, while his mother was an unknown artist. He speaks about how, at a young age, it became very important to him to understand what the unifying factor of different ways of knowing was.

01/10/11:

I’m having a crisis of faith. A crisis of Person-Centred, nondirective faith. I spent all of yesterday reading solution focused stuff online thinking this nondirective stuff is great but seriously am I making any real difference to these people's lives? Am I a shit therapist? They're not kidding when they say that being a trainee therapist is stressful. Maybe I should simply be a behaviourist. Maybe I should be a happiness focused coach! “I’m telling you now that the meaning of life is happiness - that is your goal. What can you do to get there? What does it look like? What does it feel like? What are you doing every day? Okay, now go and do it.”

Where does behaviourism fit within non-directive, constructivist psychotherapy,
where the person's own subjective view of the world is to be ultimately respected? Behavioural interventions, which are checking out the validity of activity in terms of creating a sustainable mood elevation, like those put forward by the applied behavioural analysis people are ultimately saying to the client, 'let's run some experiments to test out the validity of your world view'. Can this practice be called and thought of as the same phenomenon that facilitates deep exploration of the patient's thoughts and feelings?

My relationship with truth, and whether there could really exist one overarching (or underlying) truth, came up continuously. I oscillated between the idea that a truth was ultimately useful and necessary for integration and that it was entirely pointless and an impossible goal. In the following entry, I prioritise utility over truth.

03/10/11

I'm thinking about that research that talked about the fact that depressed people are the ones who are experiencing life correctly and it is the happy people who are deluding themselves. That's really powerful. And pretty depressing. If happiness is delusional, then how can I delude my clients properly? Is that the right thing to asking myself? By saying this, I am explicitly saying that I believe that truth is not as important as utility. And I am saying that I believe happiness, not something like insight, is the goal?

Utility was not the only thing that got favoured, at different times, over truth. In the following entry, I discuss the orientation I was currently experiencing toward an acutely constructivist view, and the idea that feelings needed to be prioritised over 'truth'.

30/10/11

So I've been reading about CBT and all this self-help, success literature on the Internet. I'm thinking about success and goal setting and doing great things with your life. I'm thinking about the happiness that comes from setting, working towards and achieving a
goal. It's great, helping people to practically change their lives and to make solution focused decisions. It’s amazing, but I'm not sure that it's therapy. When I'm sad, I'm not sure that I need to hear that this feeling has no meaning. I don’t really need to hear that I should think my way out of this feeling, or behave differently to feel a better bodily sensation. When I feel bad, I think that the feeling has some meaning...that it needs to be explored. That's how it feels, even if that isn't really true.

The issue of subjective emotions versus objective truth is one that every therapist must contend with, and is fundamental to the development of any functioning theory of practice. I wrote often of a theoretical discrepancy around the utility of the exploration of feelings. Some approaches advocate it as being the facilitation of a meaning making process, while other therapies propose actively not thinking about the things which are bothering us in order to feel better. The notion that exploring ones feelings might be counterproductive without a fundamental philosophical grounding, came up repeatedly.

08/08/12

The belief that feelings are meaningful and complex might be iatrogenic to our patients. Maybe we are just re-traumatising them. Or facilitating rumination. Talking about your feelings does help, though...for some reason, but it can also be problematic. It’s like with this journaling...by the end I wasn't thinking enough because I was feeling too much.

But epistemological issues around psychotherapy were not the only ones which manifested for me. Pragmatic considerations, around skills, techniques and behavioural interventions were also frequent fodder for my reflections. I kept coming back to the types of approaches that advocate an emphasis on viewing behaviour and thoughts and mood as discrete categories. Despite my constant claims to dislike these 'reductionist' viewpoints, something kept bringing me back to them. I had a desire to problem solve...I just needed a unifying, underlying construct to work from. I began to think that every patient I saw was coming with the same issue. I just needed to work out what that was.
In retrospect, some of the discomfort, and often, disdain that I felt towards the more directive approaches was not necessarily about the approaches themselves (although sometimes it was just that) but the fact that without a philosophical 'true north', being directive could be problematic. However, with a consistent, underlying truth, directiveness might be able to be integrated into my practice.

23/04/12:

I feel yucky. I feel disgusting. I feel horrible. I feel guilty. Because I feel CBT. I am disgusting. I am directive. I am reductionist. I am philosophically modest. I have an agenda. I value process of over relationship. I am putting a Band-Aid over a gaping wound. I am doing CBT to make my life easier. Is Anakin becoming Darth Vader? Am I going to the dark side? I can’t wait to be out of this morally ambiguous den of iniquity.

Ultimately, it came down to the fact that there needed to be something for me unifying all of these ideas, to hold it all together, to allow me to try different things at different times in different ways, without throwing the baby out with the psychodynamic bath water. I was searching for this thing, and I had been for years. Even before going into psychology.

22/04/12:

I am always looking for one truth. One underlying answer. One thing that will slot into place and give me that light bulb moment, when I will realise exactly what this therapy thing actually is. I am such a closet positivist...(well, sometimes, anyway). Am I looking for complex things to be less complex? I seem unable to accept the fact that the thing that made me happy last week is different to (and on occasion the exact opposite of) the thing that is making me happy this week. Two different things can make a patient happy on two different occasions, and two different therapeutic approaches can be fascinating to read about for different reasons...and they don’t have to be connected on some underlying philosophical level, in order to be interesting. People can be inconsistent. And so can I...as a person, but can I be inconsistent as a therapist? Is that okay?
Professional development: Axiomatic ‘truth’ as a means of facilitating integration

And so finally, the light-bulb moment occurred. The eureka experience that Moustakas talked about. The realisation and the thing that would make all of the angst worthwhile. At the time, it did seem like a eureka moment, and it was facilitated, strangely enough, by a kind of trainee burnout. By experiencing some of the feelings that the patients were going through, as well as the stresses of doctoral level therapist training and some family health issues, I experienced my own (albeit mild) form depression, which ultimately proved hugely educative. West (2004) talks about therapists as shamans, an idea that no self-respecting, narcissistic psychologist would not warm to. He talks of how Freud and Jung and Rogers all went through a “creative illness” (West, 2004, p.27). I humbly, and somewhat facetiously, submit that perhaps this was mine. When I was feeling low I realised that I was thinking differently about myself, and had internalised some of the stress. When stressful events occurred, they would normally affect my mood temporarily, before going away, but as the stress persisted it began to take hold. The difference was the way that I saw myself. The change that occurred moved me from ‘being bummed out that I had had tough sessions that day’ to ‘I am having tough sessions and cannot cope and am a bit of a crap therapist’. I was having an experiential realisation.

At the same time, I was processing the therapeutic work that I had done, and the outcomes and their meanings. Every client said the same thing when they left. At the end, when we were reviewing therapy, and looking at what had changed and doing the relapse prevention work that we are supposed to do. They all echoed the same sentiment, in various different ways, which foreshadowed my own personal revelation.

This realisation had been ‘cooking’ all the way through my journal, with entries such as the following:

20/07/11:
I've realised something. Okay so maybe 'realised' is a weird word for it, because it's something that I've always known. It's something that everyone has always known. Since they were children. What people want...everyone...clients, therapists, parents, children...is to feel like they matter. That's all that they (my clients) were talking about today. That might be all they ever talk about. Wanting to feel as if they matter. How is this realisation different to anything that I've written before, though? How is this new learning? How is this any different to stuff I've read!? Is it just that writing about it again and again, and being open to the experiencing of it continuously, is a better, deeper learning process?

This idea repeatedly presented itself when I was reviewing my journal. It was around clients speaking about feeling valued and important and as if they mattered. But I wanted a very simple, discreet overarching category for this. To internalise it experientially, so that the therapeutic act, not the therapeutic word as, Yalom (2002), would say, becomes something that is not like learning about bikes, but was, instead like riding a bike. For Yalom, though, it was about death anxiety, and for Mearns and Cooper it was about existential loneliness, for Rogers it was self-actualisation. For some there was no underlying problem, and small lifestyle issues were to be solved as they presented themselves. For me however, it was something else.

25/05/12:

Is all psychotherapy only about improving self-esteem!? Is that all that it ever is? If we feel better about ourselves, we stop being anxious that we will not be able to handle the challenges that are to come. If we feel better about ourselves we don’t ruminate upon depressing thoughts because...well we can’t, if we like ourselves. The self is the thing that we are always with. The thing that we can never escape. If we internalise the things that make us unhappy, then we must bring them around with us, and sadness becomes depression and stress becomes anxiety. This is definitely second-order change though. Is changing the relationship we have with ourselves something that can take place in brief therapy? If this level of second-order change occurs then first-order change becomes unnecessary. Because when you like yourself you don't need any of the other things. And you definitely don't need a CBT therapist to help you to write a more effective shopping
As I reviewed the work that I had done, I realised that I was hearing the same thing from clients, again and again, in different ways. When they were depressed or anxious they were always talking about not liking themselves or not trusting themselves to effectively handle the situation that was coming. I use the term self-esteem sometimes, to discuss a complex relationship that we have with our own sense of self. This is an esoteric, complex, phenomenon that defies simplification, but for the purposes of the current study, I will temporarily overlook this and refer to it as a discreet entity. Self-esteem or sense of self will be used to describe this though I think that a further heuristic study of this phenomenon is required. All the great thinkers knew this. Paul Gilbert talks about it in compassion focused therapy, and being compassionate with oneself. Rogers talks about self-actualisation and unconditional positive regard. Ellis says unconditional self-acceptance.

24/10/11:
Well I said goodbye to my client today. To my friend. I need not have worried that I would feel nothing. I feel sad and really really happy. He is doing amazingly - he talked about knowing who he is and really, really appreciating himself. He is not going to take shit from anyone anymore. He is going to put himself first. Once he learned to see himself in a better way, he fixed all the problems that he had in his life. I am happy with all of this.

In my journal, I have a letter that I wrote to myself about myself on 08/02/12. It was part of an assignment given to us in a lecture on Third Wave CBT and Paul Gilbert's Compassion Focused Therapy. We were instructed to write to ourselves telling ourselves about all the good things that we had done and the good things that we thought about ourselves. It made me feel better to relate to myself in that way, perhaps unsurprisingly. When I read back through it, however, it sounded like the stuff that clients were saying to me upon the completion of therapy. This notion that sense of self was the key also affected
my personal development. In fact, my personal development became a lens through which to see the process of therapy and my findings about it.

05/12/11:

My procrastination is about this too. I decide that I should withhold approval from myself, in an effort to motivate myself. What I should have been doing is just approving of my way of working, and through that thought process, approving myself into motivation. Also, I’m a better therapist if I am happy and liking myself. So therefore I have to...and this is hard for me to write...in order to give them the best, most ethical care that I can, I have to put them second to me. It does clients no good for me to go home and ruminate on their sad stories, despite the fact that it does clients considerable good to feel sad with them about their sad stories when you are in the room. I’m a fucker for counter-transference, and taking stuff home with me.

My writing began to focus more and more on this specific principle.

11/11/12:

This is the main, overarching, axiomatic finding of all of this. It is the number one learning point that came from years of journaling and personal development work. This is the finding from which all the others come. When this became clear to me, everything else fell into place...and I feel different. It has quieted some of the competing thoughts that were battling in my head. Some of the trainee anxiety that I was experienced has dissipated. Some, not all. I’m not entirely sure why, but it feels like maybe I have something to ‘hang it all on’ or some kind of sturdy foundation or base which makes me feel less rocky in my work. Why exactly do I feel better, though?

As I continued to explore my illumination, I realised that it wasn't just feeling like I had unearthed a truth for myself that relieved my anxieties. It wasn't the idea that I now believed sense of self to be key to my work and therefore would work better and more freely, it was the having of a truth for myself. It was the making sense of all of the complexities of psychotherapy for myself and giving it this personal meaning. I describe it as an axiomatic truth in a lot of my journal
entries because that's how it felt for me. It felt like clarification. While many therapists that I admired did not work with self-esteem as being central to their practice, all of the theorists that I respected approached helping from some philosophical 'true north', even if their axiomatic truth was about specifically focusing on the problems of living that were external to the client. My illumination for me became about knowing what my personal truth was for myself and learning the value of working to find that subjective truth. I had originally conceptualised my findings as being around the utility of self-esteem in psychotherapy, but as I processed my heuristic enquiry further, I realised that my illumination had really been about the process of coming to an axiomatic truth. Training in psychotherapy is just as anxiety provoking as the literature asserts it to be because learning about this job is not the same as becoming proficient in another profession. Trainee therapists have to decide what it is that they think that the job that they do is. They have to call it something. They have to hitch their wagon to a particular star and it is that decision-making process that I came to believe had some importance and meaning.

I started to think about how this personal truth could be brought about more efficiently and what kind of pragmatic interventions could be used to facilitate this shift in the way that people view themselves. I started thinking about behavioural interventions.

13/07/11:

*Because sometimes, when we aren't quite able to feel love for ourselves, and we can't quite get ourselves to fully commit to the feeling of not caring what other people think of us, so, on those days sometimes we need to just 'act-as if', and let the behaviour lead us toward the feeling. Some days, when we can't quite muster the feeling, we have to act like we are what we want to be, and somehow it comes around. Kinda like me and being a psychologist...*

I brought it to skills quite quickly. I was thinking practically, that if we could define, in a discreet manner, what needs to be worked on, then perhaps I could
come up with simple tasks to be accomplished in therapy. I was hearing that the construction of a positive sense of self was what brought about an end to their symptoms and I began to wonder if I could facilitate this in a more efficient and pragmatic manner. I was focused on doing and behaving and changing one’s life and ones thoughts. I was thinking that this could very easily be brought about by simple, structured interventions. I wanted quick, practical change...and perhaps a way that I could work in some traditional health care setting with more ease.

I attempted these interventions with little success. Getting people to reconnect with their lost sense of self was not easily facilitated through making lists of their good qualities or engaging in behaviour that would lead to an increased sense of self-esteem, or strangely enough, talking about self-esteem as a discreet entity. It seemed to me that the developing of a better relationship with oneself was not easily facilitated through conscious, cognitive methods. And so, it became obvious that defining the goal of therapy was insufficient, and that the method of therapy was equally as important, but unfortunately far less simple.

**Professional development: The practical application of illumination**

Once I had suitably established the goal of therapy in my head, head, I moved on to the methods of achieving this goal. I contemplated various means of accomplishing it.

**04/07/11:**
*Today’s session went really well. I addressed the immediacy issues with that patient, and we spent the entire session discussing our relationship. We told each other how much we liked each other and that seemed like it worked as a therapeutic intervention...*

The following week a change became overwhelmingly apparent in him.

**11/07/11:**
*Okay, I'm on the bus into the office then off to the hospital to run my clinic. I'm thinking*
about [the client] and where we need to be going...not that this stuff ever works the way I expect it to. Maybe we need to focus more on what his goals really are. I mean what does he get from this? Is it just a really good relationship? If that is the case, is that enough? Could he get that elsewhere? I guess what is important is that he doesn't get it elsewhere. So, is the relationship both necessary and sufficient? They all [clients] talk about not getting valued out there, and just needing to be valued. They say that they like getting valued here, in therapy, but is that what it should be!? Should I be their best friend, or should I be helping them find new best friends or repairing their relationships with their current significant others? Can I be both the best friend and the planner of finding new best friends? Is that inconsistent?

Also, if I treat them like totally worthwhile, inherently valuable human beings am I setting them up for disappointment when their wife or their boss or their local grocer doesn't continue this?

11/07/11:

Wow. Today was a great day. I was worried about allowing the relationship to be the work. I was wondering about where we were with goals and strategies and things and it just doesn't seem to matter, because after the session last week where we talked about what we meant to each other and he left feeling great...after that session he started to notice, for the first time in five years...he had times of experiencing no pain. No pain, isn't that incredible? Like really incredible! He said that therapy had taken away his pain. I'm ecstatic. I'm proud of myself and I'm proud of him. The way he had done the work and healed himself...and I helped heal him. I feel great. Being a trainee doesn't suck today. Okay, I'm also feeling completely and utterly exhausted. I'm going to bed...

Similar concepts emerged from other excerpts.

17/07/11:

She said something last week that really got me. She said that she woke in the night and was scared. But she didn't know what had woken her. It might have been a noise she heard but she may have woken herself by crying in her sleep, because, she said matter-of-factly, she cries in her sleep. Jesus Christ. The poor woman. Isn't that the saddest
thing you have ever heard? Seriously, I wanted so much to make things better for her in that moment.

What brought about the change in her was not our exploration of these memories necessarily, as much the relationship that we developed together. But soon I brought it around to skills that could be easily applied and utilized, to take away my anxiety about just allowing it to be something and I also wanted to make a reasonable contribution to academic knowledge.

19/07/11:

I was so aware that the connection and the relationship was what was making things better for him, which made me desperate to make it happen, which didn't make it happen. This connection he talks about. But when we found it hard to relate at that level, at least we were able to talk about how hard it was that we weren't in that bubble together. So Mearns and Cooper have got something, then...

As I thought more about this I wondered how using the relationship to heal could be a foundational home-base from which to integrate other approaches.

22/07/11:

Brian Thorne talking about his "conviction that in the last analysis, it is love with understanding that heals" (Thorne, 1991, pp.14-15). Brilliant. Perfect. Totally insightful and theoretically consistent...but can I be doing this while I give a depressed patient a mood chart as homework and push them to just please, if it's not pushy of me to ask...please, get out of bed today.

I discussed one of my clients, who, in my reflective journal I named Dora, after the famous Freudian patient. At one point I was feeling a lot of anxiety around challenging her to explore buried memories from her childhood that she would bring me to, before moving away from.

29/08/11:
My Dora. What a fascinating woman. Her mind is full of trapdoors and cellars and secret passageways. Her mind has come to accommodate all of these bad memories. To file them anyway so it's to be able to cope and function in the real world. But she is not functional. It is my task to free her to do this. Sigmund Freud. He was undoubtedly a genius. And tomorrow I will attempt to follow his footsteps with my own Dora. Do I dare? Can I be such a precocious narcissist that I think I can go and explore the depths of another's mind willy-nilly? To play God in this fashion seems to go against those therapeutic ethics about which I bang on, ad naseum. But this is not an unethical decision I make and it is certainly not one that I make easily. She has wanted to make sense of these memories for as long as I have been seeing her. I have not wanted to focus on her past and repressed memories for fear of bringing something to light that may end up re-traumatising her. But this is not an unethical decision. Allowing my insecurities as a trainee to stop me doing what she has implicitly and explicitly stated that she wants and needs, that is unethical. It is my duty and my job to explore the inner recesses of her psyche with her. To be her partner on this exploration. And just because it sounds exciting and really really cool doesn't mean it's unethical.

As it happened, it wasn't the facing her past which healed, she told me later. It was her feeling less guilty about her role in her past abuse, or what she perceived as being her role in it. We spoke of the feelings rather than the exact events and she said that it was the relationship that healed, not the archaeological digging.

While on some occasion, I felt like I was doing nothing but following Roger's philosophy, other times I strongly felt that this was not enough.

25/10/11:

Okay, so here's something I don't like about Person-Centred therapy. The practice of it, not the philosophy, just to delineate. I don't like reflections. As the recipient of the therapeutic act I often feel that you can't meet me here and climb inside my feelings with me, so stop trying to. Stop trying to walk alongside me, or whatever Rogerian shit you think. I just want congruence really. And silence to be able to talk. It's easy to show me that you're listening and you care, so just shut up and leave me to do the work. Don't give me pointless reflections, please. Thank you.
No sooner had I fully defined what I believed psychotherapy to truly and completely be about, I started to question myself on it. I began to realise that making a definitive decision on the practice of psychotherapy might not remove trainee anxiety to the degree that I had hoped.

19/06/12:
Okay great, he’s better. Happy. Ecstatic. He’s excited about life. He says he now knows that he is 'awesome'. But I don’t have a clue what actually happened in that room. As a patient he’s gotten what he wants...but I don’t have what I want. I want to know exactly what I did, or what we did together which brought about this massive change. I asked him, of course. And he said it’s just being listened to and feeling cared about. He became emotional so I figured I mightn’t ask him to specifically operationalise those terms for me...

As I continued to have discussions with myself about this, I came to my own decision about not just what I believed therapy to be about philosophically, but what it was that I was actually doing outside of the classroom in that therapy room.

09/12/12:
The unfortunate and inconvenient irony of the human condition is that we all formulate our sense of self in relationship with another. In similar ways, Bowlby (1951) and Freud (1920) talked about secure attachment and the sense of self that we develop based on the relationship that we have with our primary care-giver. It is, I believe, the reparative relationship with the therapist that enables patients to reconceptualise their sense of self. This idea has been stated in various forms previously, notable by Rogers, (1961), Mearns and Cooper (2005) and Buber (1958). However, I do not claim that the common factor is the relationship. The relationship is a vessel for cultivating the common factor. Self-esteem is the common factor, and while the relationship is not the only way to increase self-esteem, it is the most effective. Non-relationally oriented therapies, and indeed no therapy at all (Eysenck, 1953) have been shown to produce effective results, and this, I believe is to do with a change in the way that the patient views themselves. However, when this change takes place due to the experiential shift that occurs through the less conscious interactions in the therapeutic relationship, as with the ideas of
Gendlin (1997), Rogers (1961), Perls (1973) and Greenberg (2011) and Yalom (1980), it occurs on a less cognitive level that ultimately has more efficacy. My overall philosophy has a Rogerian feel to it, but it is not fully analogous to the Person-Centred Approach. While I am in agreement with him on the goal of therapy and what is usually the best means of accomplishing it, he explicitly stated a lack of belief in the possibility of integration, which I do not share (Rogers, 1961). I believe that the relationship accomplishes the goal most effectively, but that a self-help book or an intervention that is 'CBT proper', or another approach which does not involve or emphasise the relationship, may also bring about some useful shifts in a person's self-concept. This belief can facilitate integration.

In this last entry I continue to make a delineation between the underlying philosophy of psychotherapy and how it manifests in practice. While my own personal illumination was around the value of self-esteem in psychotherapy and my own personal means of expressing that illumination in the therapy room was around the utility of the relationship, my truth is not every therapist's truth. What I came to understand as I explored my realisations further was that, just like I had to formulate my own subjective truth around the philosophy of therapy, I also had to make some conscious as well as unconscious decisions around how the ideology or axiomatic truth that I had constructed for myself would actually function in terms of the way that I practiced as a therapist. I had to decide how exactly my subjective truth would perpetuate itself in my work; in what I said, how I acted and what I brought into the therapy room. If my experience is similar to that of any other trainee's (which I am not sure that it is), or if it can say something meaningful about training then perhaps it is saying that training is difficult and stressful and often boring and arduous. If however, one can sit with the theoretical ambiguities that create so much anxiety and process it all experientially, then perhaps one can come to some meaningful way of bringing it all together and integrating it on a philosophical level and eventually construct their own integrative practice based on this. Through all of this, there is some hope then of quieting the chatter of the voices of competing theories and silencing the battles of integration that raged in my head. Finding something I could really believe helped me overcome the anxiety that if I stood for nothing then I was falling for everything.
**Creative synthesis**

The heuristic process culminates with a creative synthesis embodying in an experiential manner, the illumination that has come about as a result of the study. In the current research, each one of the themes that manifest produced its own creative synthesis in much the same way that heuristic inquiry with more than one subject usually produces a composite depiction to represent each of the participant’s contributions. I produced a piece of visual art to represent each of the themes. They are presented below:
1) Personal development: Trainee anxiety
2) Personal development: Overcoming procrastination and boredom anxiety
3) Professional development: Making sense of theoretical ambiguity
4) Professional development: Searching for a needle of truth in a postmodern haystack
5) Professional development: Axiomatic ‘truth’ as a means of facilitating integration

6) Professional development: The practical application of illumination
IN THE NOT SO DISTANT FUTURE, THE GREAT APOCALYPSE HAS COME. THE FEW REMAINING HAVE BEEN ALTERED ON THE CELLULAR LEVEL BY THE NUCLEAR DISASTER. THEY HAVE DEVELOPED ABILITIES BEYOND THOSE OF NORMAL HUMANS. SOME HAVE BANDED TOGETHER AND CREATED A MAKE-SHIFT SCHOOL FOR THE GIFTED, WHERE THEY LEARN TO CONTROL AND USE THEIR POWERS TO BETTER WHAT IS LEFT OF HUMANITY. ON A RECONNAISSANCE MISSION TO THE RUINS OF THE OLD CITY, TWO TRAINEES HAVE BECOME LOST...

I CAN FEEL HER PRESENCE...

THEY LEAD ME TO HER...

ANNA? CAN YOU HEAR ME?

I FOLLOW MY FEELINGS...

ANNA, YOU'VE BEEN HURT. BADLY...

YOU NEED TO TAKE DOWN YOUR SHIELD. I'M GOING TO USE MY POWERS TO TAKE AWAY YOUR PAIN.

YOU NEED TO LET ME IN.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IT WILL WORK? WE HAVEN'T BEEN TRAINED TO USE OUR POWERS LIKE THAT...
Each of the pieces of visual art produced as the creative synthesis were influenced by the expressionist art movement. This seemed appropriate as I was attempting to express tacit knowledge and emotions in a creative fashion. For the theme of ‘trainee anxiety’ I constructed a photographic montage of still images that I captured from videos of my routine practice reviews at university as well as video footage of me in my personal therapy. I used a computer graphics program to paint over some of the images to create a more expressionist feel. In the centre is a close up painted-over photograph of my
face, with the images of me as therapist and me as client to represent the constant thoughts that were running through my head around the nature of psychotherapy. For the theme of 'overcoming procrastination and boredom anxiety' I took a photograph of myself whilst studying and experiencing boredom and edited in a computer graphics program. I used several filters to create a more abstract piece of art, in keeping with the expressionist theme, softening the lines and enhancing the colours. I decided to present it in black and white however to represent monotonous nature of studying and the apathy I often experienced. I then enhanced the line quality of the piece to represent the structure that I resented being imposed on me and the feeling of having to 'stay inside the lines'. For the theme of 'making sense of theoretical ambiguity' I produced an abstract acrylic painting on canvas. It is divided diagonally into two sections to represent competing theoretical ideologies attempting to meet. Both sections attempt to display an energy and movement and even anxiety that I experienced when these theories tried to come together. One section consists of energetic blue swirls inspired by Van Gogh's 'Starry Night', a famous piece of expressionist work. The other section consists of a more linear expressionist style inspired by a contemporary expressionist artist called Clayton Kashuba. The blue swirling section is juxtaposed by the purple linear section to display my experience of the coming together of two theoretical ideologies which are inherently different on a fundamental level. For the theme of 'searching for a needle of truth in a post-modern haystack', I produced another abstract acrylic painting on canvas. The search for truth that I undertook is represented by a tunnel with a light at the end of it. The tunnel is not one of concrete or stone. Instead the journey is through a nebulous, intangible fog with the light at the end possibly being only a optical illusion. This represents the questionable nature of truth in a post-modern paradigm. For the theme of 'axiomatic 'truth' as a means of facilitating integration' I created a computer-generated piece of art which I again juxtaposed two competing ideologies in a similar fashion as my abstract painting of theoretical ambiguity. The diagonal divide through the piece also mirrors the painting, however this piece includes images and words signifying concepts and ideas from the humanistic and behavioural paradigms. On one side it attempts to represent the more spiritual or ethereal side of therapy while on the other side it displays a more scientific view. For the theme 'the practical application of illumination' I created a computer-generated comic strip set in a
dystopian future where there is a school for gifted humans, to train them in the use of their enhanced powers of empathy. Derivative of the X-men comics, it tells the story of two lost trainees, one using his empathic abilities to help the other, which represents routine practice reviews in training. Instead of using a linear style more traditionally associated with comic book art I chose instead to maintain the focus on expressionism.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter the themes that came from analysing the reflective journal are explained and further analysed. This chapter was very specifically structured. Within the themes it was attempted in as much as it was possible to have the excerpts appear in the chronological order with which they occurred in the reflective journal in order to accurately represent the journey of the training process. The themes however were ordered in a way that constructed a specific, coherent storyline. I felt it important to construct a narrative that adhered to a classical dramatic structure involving a beginning, a catalysing event, a climax and a denouement. In this context the problem of integration served as the catalysing event while the importance of an axiomatic truth served as the climax, with the denouement being facilitated by the writings on the application of illumination. These phases can be considered to be analogous to the stages of heuristics so that the stages of this project are delineated into sub-stages which are theoretically consistent. It can be argued that the sub-structure being self-referential to its overall structure maintains the positioning of this research in the post-modern arena.
Introduction

In previous chapters the literature on training, personal development and reflective writing has been reviewed, heuristic methodology has been explored and the themes that emerged in terms of personal and professional development were discussed. In this chapter, the findings will be discussed in relation to how they answer the research question. The process of journaling as a useful method for personal and professional development is then examined. The wider scope of my research is then hypothesised upon and reliability and ethics are discussed.

Answering the research questions

The data analysis chapter was largely concerned with answering the first research question in this study, as it documents my experience with the help of extracts from my reflective journal. I will now discuss how I will go about answering both of the research questions more explicitly in terms of the findings from the current study. The research questions that fuelled my heuristic inquiry were:

What was my personal experience of constructing an integrative theory of practice?

And
What contribution can my heuristic investigation of reflective writing offer to integrative psychotherapy training?

The themes that manifested from the heuristic analysis of my journaling process were as follows:

1) Personal development: Trainee anxiety
2) Personal development: Overcoming procrastination and boredom anxiety
3) Professional Development: Making sense of theoretical ambiguity
4) Professional Development: Searching for a needle of truth in a postmodern haystack
5) Professional Development: Axiomatic ‘truth’ as a means of facilitating integration
6) Professional Development: The practical application of illumination

I will begin by briefly describing some of the experiential learning that occurred for me through the thematic analysis as well as the creative synthesis phases of this study. I will discuss some of the surprises that came about as a result of the tacit awareness that was unearthed through the creative synthesis phase and despite the fact that I had written the journals and completed the thematic analysis, new unconscious knowledge surfaced from the producing of the creative pieces. This section goes towards answering the first research question about my experience of constructing an integrative theory of practice. It is therefore relatively personal and subjective. I will then discuss what I have come to believe about journalling for professional development, which will go towards answering the second research question on what contribution my heuristic investigation of reflective writing can offer to integrative psychotherapy.
training. I will then go on to talk about how reliable this form of learning is and whether or not it actually functions in practice. This goes towards answering both research questions. At this point I write about the wider scope of my research and ask whether recommending reflective writing is an ethical contribution to psychotherapy training, based on my experience of the process. Therefore this section contributes to answering the second research question. Finally, to contribute to research on training I offer my perspective on the polarising question of ‘at what point during psychotherapy training should integration occur’?

Reflecting on reflecting on reflecting

It is clear upon analysing these themes that my personal experience of constructing an integrative theory of practice involved anxiety, procrastination and boredom. These findings are not dissimilar to those of research that has come before it and were not unexpected. However, my personal exploration of these perhaps predictable themes helped me to understand my process in a more experiential way. For instance, while I would have predicted that anxieties I would feel in my doctoral training would have focused on fulfilling the requirements of the course in an academically satisfactory fashion, my anxieties were much more personal. The areas in which I was being assessed and judged did not turn out to be fodder for reflections. Instead, what mainly concerned me in my writings was how useful I, as a trainee therapist, could be to the clients that I was seeing. This was not in relation to supervision or assessment of my practice by the university or in my placement, but merely the knowledge that I was helping, and the importance of this to my self concept. My procrastination and boredom excerpts also bought with them some fundamental learning about myself. I had always viewed myself as being somewhat lazy and pragmatic and having a desire to get things done in the most efficient way possible. Desire for efficiency, I believed, was the aetiology of my procrastination. This, I know now, could not be further from the truth. What I perceived as procrastination based on pragmatism was in fact an anxiety based on perfectionism. By monitoring my thoughts and behaviour as well as my
feelings, I realised that I was not in fact being efficient at all. I was expending large pockets of time thinking and analysing and ruminating instead of doing. While none of these findings may sound atypical to a psychotherapist who has worked with anxiety and procrastination, they were not at all in keeping with my self concept and I had to accommodate this into the idea I had about myself. The creative synthesis pieces that I produced for the themes around anxiety, procrastination and boredom involved the use of photographs of myself. There is something somewhat discombobulating about taking photographs of yourself which represent your least favoured character traits and then painting over and editing them into a creative piece which represents these undesirable idiosyncrasies. As strange as the feelings seemed, however, I must admit that the process forced me to engage with these sides of myself that I had previously covered up with a 'chilled out' demeanour that I had cultivated. While working on these creative pieces I even came to the realisation that this relaxed persona I had created had been one for which I had been positively 'stroked' (to use a transactional analysis term), in my childhood and my teens, by my family, my teachers and a culture in which being 'grand' was seen as positive.

My personal experience of becoming an integrative therapist also involved tolerating theoretical ambiguities and a search for truth, despite my alleged post-modern leanings. My anxieties over tolerating theoretical ambiguity and my desire to find some underlying consistency surprised me somewhat. While my research is positioned in post-modernism and while I certainly define myself as a post-modernist, I did not adhere unwaveringly to this philosophy. Many times throughout the research project I questioned my status as a post-modern thinker and often wondered if I was secretly an 'uncool' positivist. While some of my journal entries seemed to lean towards a desire for positivism, when I created the artwork to represent these themes I was able to clarify this apparent incongruence within myself. The art works were expressionistic, abstract paintings which seemed to demonstrate to me something about my world view. The two competing philosophical approaches in one of the paintings and the light at the end of the tunnel in the other piece, were both rendered in and unstructured and abstract fashion. While completing them I realised that my desire for a 'truth' did not conflict with my post-modern thinking and that my
occasional forays into the world of positivism was actually the most post-modern writing that I had engaged in throughout the research. What I realised was that, for me, post-modernism was about all potential truths being valuable and all ways of viewing the world being worthy of discussion and investigation. Therefore, my temporary hiatuses from the post-modern world, into the realm of the positivist, was consistent with post-modernism in a kind of meta-postmodern fashion.

My writings on developing axiomatic truth and later, a means of practically applying this to therapy are central findings in my research not just in terms of my experience of becoming an integrative psychotherapist, but also, in relation to my construction of a theory of practice and will be discussed further later in the study.

**Journalling for professional development**

The discussion chapter up until this point has focused on the learning that came about from the reflective process. It will now look at the learning that came about from that learning and position it in the context of the literature on training, in order to answer the second research question around the contribution that my heuristic investigation of reflective writing can offer to integrative psychotherapy training.

For the purposes of the discussion of my research I will attempt to look at reflective practice in terms of professional development and personal development separately. The learning points above are mainly focused on the constructing of an integrative theory of practice and the heuristic process largely revolved around professional learning that came as a result of the journalling process. It is my contention that if reflective journaling is to be used to a greater extent within therapist training, that personal and professional development be made somewhat more distinct entities, even if this delineation is somewhat
arbitrary. The findings therefore, to some extent, disagree with the idea that personal and professional development need to be so completely intertwined, as stated by Wilkins (1997), and that there may be some utility, for the training process, in working towards a means of separating them for the purposes of facilitating better training and in the context of this research, to look at the utility of journaling for these two distinct goals.

In terms of journaling for professional development, I found that heuristic inquiry functioned well to facilitate the construction of an integrative theory of practice, as put forward by Jasper (2005) and Wright (2006). Using reflective writing as a forum to make sense of competing theoretical philosophies, and to discuss the practical outcomes of particular therapeutic interventions, when analysed heuristically was something I found extremely helpful. This came about as a result of deeply engaging, theoretically, with psychotherapy integration, using heuristics in much the same way that Hiles (2002) discusses. My process was one of distillation. Through reflection and then reflecting on the reflections and allowing tacit knowledge to come about, it was possible for an axiomatic truth to emerge, one from which all integrative activity could come. The creative synthesis that emerged on this topic helped me to realise that theories could sit together, even if I needed to see it clearly laid out on paper in my art work to truly believe this. In my research, my axiomatic truth was around the importance of a sense of self, which echoes the writings of Wolfe (2000). While I would like to believe that my findings on self esteem would be of some interest to readers of this project, the axiomatic truth that I defined for myself is not held by every therapist. What I found most useful was the process of arriving at an axiomatic truth and how that fundamentally altered my experience of engaging with theory as well as bringing a greater ease to my practice. For instance, for those therapists who do not identify with the importance of self-esteem in the therapeutic process, an axiom such as 'every problem has a solution' or 'insight is always useful' might also function well. In these cases, the therapy could prove effective not only because of the practitioners ability to facilitate the client to overcome some of their current problems of living, or facilitating insightful self knowledge, but also to communicate these messages to the client in a more experiential manner. The importance of communicating our beliefs experientially
was discussed in the data analysis chapter and experiential learning was found by Truax, Carkhuff and Douds (1964) to have substantial utility. What became important for me was having a theoretical touchstone with which I deeply and personally identified and from there I came to feel that everything I experientially communicated to clients was consistent. My findings agree with ideas of the literature on the utility of common factors in therapy training (Lampropoulos, 2006; Castonguay, 2000) and as I progressed through my doctorate this resonated with me more and more. What others had called common factors, I experienced as an axiomatic truth which guided me and the common factors literature suggesting that skills should emerge from principles echoes what I wrote about in my data analysis.

Perhaps surprisingly, I found some resonance with the law of parsimony in terms of theoretical construction. In this way I made some peace with concepts of positivism finding their way into post-modernism, in that I found some value in making something highly complex into something simple and explicit. I wanted a way to allow it to exist within a simple definition while maintaining all of its complexities, and without losing any of its richness. This idea is somewhat similar to Cooper and McLeod’s (2011) ideas of how complex post-modern thinking does not negate a more reductionist approach, though the my findings are not pluralistic in nature. This weaving between the complex and the reductionist was facilitated by the heuristic process which has the ability to marry together the cognitive and the tacit in a structured manner, akin to the what Eraunt (2000) discusses, to produce an elegant, sophisticated truth that can also be easily intellectualised in a transparent fashion. For this reason, my research contends that a heuristic analysis of reflective writing can become an effective and theoretically consistent way of enhancing professional development in integration training, and adds to the existing research on this (Hiles, 2002; Turner, Gibson, Bennetts and Hunt, 2008; Nuttall, 2006).

The findings from this study also concur with the writings of Schon (1983) who argued that all competent professional practitioners must know more than they can verbalise and necessarily utilise the tacit dimensions of knowing to do their
jobs. He claims reflective practice to be the most beneficial way of understanding our tacit knowledge. He warns against an unstructured approach to reflective practice however and claims that a non-pragmatic practice may have less than beneficial effects. Coming out the other end of this experience I would now say that I can see some wisdom in Schon’s recommendation. Throughout the project, my journalling was informed by the ideas of tacit knowledge in heuristics, as well as my way of practicing therapy. I approached it from the perspective that reflecting on whatever was on my mind was potentially meaningful, that imposing structure on the process would inhibit my connecting with my less conscious awareness and that all roads lead to Rome. If I was to go back in time and give a recommendation to the me of four years ago who was beginning to study, I would advise him to be more structured in the way that he reflected, so as to get more out of the process. I now feel that my reflective writing has more utility when it is kept focused. The best way that I can think of to articulate this is to demonstrate it, with an excerpt from my reflective journal. However, this is not an excerpt from any of the reflective journals that made up the data for this study. This is an excerpt from the journal that I have been keeping since I finished the analysis. One that is just for me and does not have any particular research goal. The obvious difference in the way that I journal now, as compared with the way I journaled then, may have something meaningful to say about structure within the reflective process. My current journal is structured as a conversation between therapist and client, with the therapist being a surly, pragmatic, solution-focused misanthrope, who is quite literally the exact opposite of my persona as a therapist. While I'm not certain what this might say about the potentially self flagellatory relationship I have with myself, the reasons that my reflective journaling evolved into this are probably around the fact that these are aspects of my personality that certainly exist and were perhaps overlooked in my idealist, magnanimous, humanistic training. Also, having experienced years of the other type of reflection, and having got what I needed from that process, this is the one that currently works for me. Overall, this imaginary discourse served to inject the process of journalling with a sense of levity, irreverence and light-heartedness that is useful in and of itself and contrasts dramatically with the journals I kept as part of the research.
The following extract was written just after Christmas 2014, when my grandmother was dying and my sister was unable to get time off work for Christmas. My mother, my father and myself flew to the UK (from Ireland) to see her on Christmas and upon hearing that my grandmother was very close to the end, we were all packing to come home on the next flight.

**27/12/14**

*Client: Aaaahhh, fuck, fuck, fuck.*

*Therapist: What?*

*Client: My sister is being pushy about the cases...everyone wants to put their shit into the case...we don't have fucking space for all my shit...fuck...everyone is like - 'this shit is just going in' and I'm like - 'it can't go in'.*

*Therapist: How do you feel?*

*Client: Like everyone is being pushy and unreasonable and irrational and everyone expects me to leave my stuff out of the case. I'm trying to get everyone to have a rational conversation but they won't listen to me. I'm just going to have to leave my stuff here.*

*Therapist: Sounds like you feel you're being pushed around.*

*Client: Yeah I do.*

*Therapist: We've talked about this before. A lot. Stand the fuck up for yourself. Stop being a loser.*

*Client: [sarcastic] Thanks, 'Doc', that's really helpful.*

*Therapist: Is it not? You need to be more assertive here. I mean, this is another example of you just acquiescing. You need to put yourself first and get your shit together. Stop worrying about everyone else. Get your stuff home and fuck the others.*

*Client: [sarcastic] Oh that's real nice.*
Therapist: It's not always the therapists job to be nice.

Client: Then you're a real good therapist. Everyone is going through a stressful time, especially my mom. I don't want to upset everyone.

Therapist: Well sometimes you have to. Go and sort it out. Now. Pack your stuff in the case and find a way to make it work.

Later...

Therapist: So, what happened?

Client: Actually, I packed most of my stuff and took out some other people’s stuff that nobody really needed.

Therapist: How did they react?

Client: Actually... No one really cared.

Therapist: How do you feel?

Client: Kinda like I was making a mountain out of a mole hill.

Therapist: So?

Client: You might have been right.

The reason I included this excerpt here is not to put forward the idea that this is how journalling should work, but rather just to show how my experience of journalling has evolved and what I decided that I needed to get from the process. I needed more structure. My structure however came from the fact that I had spent many hours reflecting on every little emotion that I was experiencing and that I needed to move on from that into something completely different. That knowledge, nonetheless, came about from the journalling. I would like to think of this excerpt as evidence of my evolving knowledge on how reflective practice can have greater utility and a statement about the advantages of
structure in this practice as put forward by Schon (1983), rather than evidence of my own dissociation. I am also aware that this was the learning that came out of the reflective process and had I not had I not reflected the way I did I would not have come to this conclusion. I am also aware that what I am saying here is very personal and that while I am, as a person, very comfortable with pontificating on the philosophical complexities of life, I am not a very structured thinker. I did not need any encouragement to contemplate the ambiguous and more undefined, philosophical areas of thinking, however, what I lacked, and what I personally needed to give myself was a means of structuring my internal processes and to get in touch with the action oriented part of myself that would help me overcome procrastination.

The inclusion of this expert is not to be misconstrued as part of the learning, but instead to be exemplar of that which I have learned from process. The inclusion of it, and it’s display of my evolving attitude to reflective writing, I believe adheres to ideas about internal supervisors manifesting within the journalling process put forward by Etherington (2004). I created an internal therapist in the manner that Etherington describes, but it also helped me to do something else which she advocated which was, exploring without inhibition, aspects of myself that I might be reluctant to share with others, and my creation of a therapist who represented the shadow side of myself may have been just this. It is also similar to what Rochlen, Zack and Speyer, (2004) discuss when they refer to the zone of reflection that online therapy has the potential to cultivate. Certainly my own reflective writing was able to facilitate a type of self-disclosure and expediency that Rochlen et al. (2004) argue can take place in online therapy.

**Reliability: Does it work?**

One of the concerns I had, going into this project was the potential for something as intangible as illumination to occur. When we initially engage with the idea of waiting for inspiration to strike us, it can seem somewhat arbitrary
and something which is outside of our control, and therefore is a potentially unreliable method of bringing about learning. Polanyi argues that all knowledge is tacit to some degree and everything is tacitly understood (1983). My learning re-iterates this and states that the process of illumination of the tacit knowing can be considered to be reliable. What Sela-Smith (2002) argues as a weakness of heuristics, the current research views as a strength. She writes that Moustakas did not delve deeply enough into his experience to bring about in-depth learning, whereas, what the current research states is that heuristics can and will bring about meaningful learning, on whatever level one chooses to utilise it. I found that when the student is ready, the teacher (or the knowledge) does in fact appear, and that this process is something on which we can rely, with respect to training. Because of the manner in which counselling psychology doctorates function, trainees are involved in lectures, reading, essay writing, placement practice, supervision and personal therapy and therefore the process of immersion is easily facilitated. I would argue that consistently and rigorously engaging with the reflective writing process and attempting to consolidate all of the information that one is being exposed to, will facilitate illumination. Indeed I believe that heuristic inquiry is a useful way of turning reflective journaling, an exercise used in many training programs into an even more meaningful way of learning. The literature on the assessing of reflecting on practice states some of the problems inherent to this process. There is a lack of agreement on how reflective writing can be assessed in a meaningful way (Wright, 2006) as well as a discomfort experienced by trainees in divulging personal information in journals that are to be formally assessed (Fitzpatrick, Kovalak & Weaver, 2010). I found that the use of heuristics to analyse my own reflective journal overcame these problems.

In terms of answering the second research question of this study around my heuristic experience having potential utility for therapy training, answering the question 'does this work?' seems an important, if somewhat reductionist, one to ask. Pennebaker’s (1997) work on the subject of expressive writing demonstrated that participants experienced increased physiological as well as psychological well-being as a result, however the benefits seems to have been less apparent to the journalers. Therefore, in light of this research, I might
potentially be uniquely unqualified to pass judgement on the utility of reflective writing. What Pennebaker's (1997) research does show however, is that reflective writing has beneficial effects that the writer is not necessarily aware of and this may be the case in the current research. His research also points to usefulness in reflective writing existing on a cognitive level, where participants can re-evaluate their life situations and make more effective life decisions as a result of engaging in this practice (Pennebaker, 1997). The analysis in the current study could be argued to demonstrate that cognitive learning occurred, and that broadly speaking this process does, in fact, 'work', in some form. I did change my practice as a result of the journalling process and this came about as a change in the way that I think about therapy. My experience also has some resonance with Pennebaker's (1997) work in that I was not acutely aware of an experiential change that came about as a result of the writing.

It has been claimed by thinkers such as Hiles, (2002), Etherington, (2001) and Nuttall, (2006) that heuristics is a particularly appropriate means of facilitating and evaluating professional development in trainee's who's development centres around the processing of complex, philosophical questions, the answers to which are subjective and my findings support this claim.

**Wider scope of my research**

There is currently no agreed upon way of amalgamating, synthesising and assessing knowledge arrived at in personal development, as discussed by Lennie (2007). In my research, I wanted to use heuristics as a means of accomplishing this. While I can argue that my personal development led me to formalise my thinking on psychotherapy and that 'getting-in-touch' with my own feelings and thoughts has led me to become a better, more competent experiential therapist, I cannot demonstrate this assertion in any objective fashion. The goal was simply to process my feelings in a more authentic fashion, and to increase self-awareness and therefore help me respond to theories and to my experiences as a therapist in a way that facilitated learning. I can personally state that the project facilitated this. As this is a relatively subjective statement, I argue it with some certainty. I cannot necessarily dispute
findings that self-awareness is counter-productive (eg. Nutt-Williams & Hill, 1996; Aveline, 1990) all I can say is that I found increased self-awareness personally and professionally advantageous. I cannot argue that an almost equivalent level of self-awareness would not have come about merely as a result of engaging with the other components of my doctoral program, however from my experience I would find this difficult to believe. The goal of this study, in terms of personal development, was merely to analyse myself and my own feelings, with an explicit departure from the idea of constructing solutions or problem solving, and engaging in the inevitable task of tolerating ambiguity as discussed by Norcross, (1988). It was believed that problem solving would interfere with the process of observing, and would lead to a lack of ability to value the complexity of the integrative process (O’Hara & Schofield, 2008). The two themes found which fell into the category of personal development were - 'trainee anxiety' and 'overcoming procrastination and boredom anxiety'. These themes did not manifest themselves in terms of some tacit answer to a fundamental question being arrived at through the heuristic process. While they were prevalent within my reflective writing, and while the current study can reiterate points made by other researchers about their inevitable occurrence in the experience of the trainee (Turner, Gibson Bennetts and Hunt, 2008; Lowndes & Hanley, 2010), I do not make any particularly strides towards the management of these phenomena for myself or for others. The analysis of my themes discusses a need to manage the self-esteem of trainees, and while it is my opinion that this would serve to mediate some of the anxieties felt by trainee's this was not an explicit finding of my research. My research merely documented my own experience of these anxieties.

What this project can demonstrate is that a substantial amount of personal development work was undertaken by this trainee. If we are to accept the idea that a more self-aware therapist is a more effective therapist as put forward by Silverman (1985), Reik (1948), Rawn (1991) and Etherington (2004b), to name but a few, then it has utility. However, despite the fact that the current researcher holds this opinion, this project itself does not necessarily demonstrate this correlation, though it can make some claims about how this type of development might occur in a meaningful way. Most of the
recommendations that the current research makes in terms of reflective writing playing a more significant role in personal development on training programs are around the idea of ethics.

**Ethics: Is it right?**

Before undertaking this project, I constructed a document which served as a consent form for myself and a statement of intent and as a result the project was approved by the University of Manchester Ethics Committee. I provided informed consent and took full responsibility for the project that I had decided to undertake. That being said, while I can argue the efficacy of reflective writing for my own professional development, I cannot, in good conscience, recommend this, in its current form, as a wholly ethical means of fostering personal development in psychotherapy training. I discussed this in many journal entries. An example of which follows:

**14/07/12**

*I have gotten too much into my feelings! Sorry, Carl [Rogers], but it’s true. I have begun to believe that my internal experience has some useful and meaningful information to impart on my intellect. That my unconscious was trying to communicate with my super-ego, or some such notion. And that might be bullshit...I might have just climbed into my resentment like it was a warm bed on a cold night.*

While I was being facetious in my writings, and while I am certainly not making the claim that self-analysis has no utility whatsoever, I was verbalising a salient point about personal writing as a training tool. That is - A reflective journal does not reflect anything back. Personal development in the form of personal therapy has been rated by trainees as being effective (Garfield & Kurtz, 1976; Norcross, Strausser-Kirkland and Missar, 1988). While it allows trainee’s to explore their personal issues and their professional anxieties in a space that is therapeutic, either by working on solutions to problems, or by holding these anxieties in an empathic relationship, a reflective journal does neither of these things, and can therefore not necessarily be argued to be a substitute for a therapeutic, or
indeed a supervisory relationship. This is not to say that I believe reflective writing can never serve such a function, but that the process would need to take into account certain ethical considerations. While it is arguable that any altering of the journaling process might contribute to the idea of suppressing the 'artistry' of the experience as spoken about by Wright, (2006), it is my opinion that this desire for artistry not take precedence over the well-being of the trainee.

What the current research proposes is that if journaling is to be implemented as a means of personal development, that it be boundaried in some fashion so as to be able to be considered a sufficiently ethical practice. Sheperd (2006) puts forward some methods of formalising this process, however, his points are largely around the questions one asks oneself in writing. Trainees could be informed that only a specific amount of time each week should be devoted to the practice, and that attractive as it may be to delve inside ones internal world, ad nauseum, that other more practical self-care strategies must also be undertaken. Another potentially helpful recommendation would be that the journaling process does not explicitly overlook the problem solving process, and that a certain amount of reductionism in terms of specifically defining the problems and external stressors that are present in the training process, and implementing strategies for overcoming them does not have to philosophically contradict the idea of in-depth self-analysis and learning as stated by O'Hara and Schofield (2008). I make these suggestions because during my time using my reflective journal to access my more deeply held feelings, I coincidentally experienced the most difficult and emotionally taxing time of my life. What I am stating is that we can never know when is an appropriate time to undertake heuristic research and that accessing the less conscious side of your experiencing may prove to be overwhelming in certain contexts.

Fauth and Williams (2005), debate the possibility that self-awareness, when it exceeds a certain level, may begin to hinder rather than help the trainee. My research found that an over emphasis on analysing on one's own inner experience may indeed be harmful. Whist undertaking this research, a number of serious health concerns presented themselves in my immediate family and
these incidents were obviously anxiety provoking, and would have been, regardless of my interest in self-reflection. However, it must be noted as psychotherapist trainees, we are unfortunately not given a reprieve from emotionally stressful life events. Things will happen in our lives that are potentially stressful or tragic and these events by their very nature will be unexpected. In terms of my undertaking of in depth self-awareness, it proved to be disadvantageous in helping me to cope with these emotionally challenging times while simultaneously managing the usual stresses of being a trainee and a therapist. The process has the potential to effect ones personality and not necessarily for the better, and therefore, I would be cautious about recommending it to novice psychologists. I discuss this in many of my entries, an example follows:

03/07/12
Okay so I can't be 100% sure about this, but I think I've become a loser. Like a proper loser. I used to be cooler than this. I'm sure I was. Wasn't I? Okay, maybe not, but at least I thought I was, which is what 's important. Somehow, through too much counselling-Psychology-philosophising, personal therapy and this stupid journal thing (I mean seriously who the fuck writes in a journal?), I have gotten in touch with my feelings or whatever. Seriously what the hell is that? I used to be able to get through bad stuff. I used to be able to navigate, with relative ease, the inevitable peaks and troughs of the experience of day to day life. But now I "feel" it deeply. I analyse my feelings and try to see what they mean. I use feelings for data, as Yalom instructed. I used to be like sarcastic and cynical and apathetic and I used to not give a shit about anything...well not anything. I had the ability to not care about the things that I chose not to care about...that, I am realising is a more important characteristic than I thought it was...

Although I was again using humour to buffer the anxiety somewhat, I am eluding to idea that a reflective journal does not aid in the construction of a positive sense of self in the same way that therapy does. While it might facilitate self-awareness, it does not necessarily facilitate that self-awareness in a fashion that promotes a positive sense of self. It is my personal belief that self-awareness is not an acceptable goal for psychotherapy, and therefore it is not an acceptable goal for personal development. It is not just a sense of self that we as therapists are trying to foster within the client, but a positive sense of self,
and therefore, in order for journaling to be considered to be an ethical personal development tool, some structures must be put in place to prevent the type downward spiralling or rumination on negative thoughts that it can lead to.

How might such a task be accomplished? An initial recommendation, would be not only to limit the amount of time that trainee's would spend journaling, but also, for there to be regularly scheduled breaks or even holidays taken from the experience. We must not view reflective writing as our only means of self-care and must maintain practices such as meditation or exercise or hobbies or socialising as put forward by behavioural activationists (Lewinsohn & Graf, 1973) as strategies for looking after ourselves. In the current research, this was found to be difficult, as the process of reflection has a certain appeal to it, and while it does have to ability to function as a catharsis, it can also facilitate self-criticism, particularly with respect to the competencies that the trainee has not yet acquired. It is therefore conceivable that reflective writing might function better if it had a more explicitly positive focus. A concentration on positive aspects of the experience of being a trainee might include acknowledging the good outcomes that one has had with clients in the past, emphasising the knowledge, both cognitive and experiential that one has acquired up to this point, while exploring new ideas in this context, and on a personal level, acknowledging and exploring some of characteristics one has, as a person as well as a therapist, which one likes about oneself. This process would acknowledge the utility of the concept of overcoming dysfunctional cognitions and negatively focused information bias (Butler & Beck, 1995). So, on those inevitable 'bad days' as a trainee, when things got a bit too much, or we did not bring about whatever we sought to bring about in therapy, that we do not spend too much time deconstructing our failures beyond what is useful and that we make the conscious choice to focus on something good that we have done, either as a therapist, or even as being a good friend or partner, or even acknowledging a strength such as cooking or athleticism or anything else which facilitates the learning to occur through a lens of self-acceptance. In this way, we must be aware that as a substitute for having an experiential relationship with our reflective journal, we must perhaps utilise some of the cognitive methods of constructing self-esteem (eg. Fennell, 1999).
McConnaughey (1987) spoke of the importance of the trainee therapist accepting and valuing themselves and that this process occurring will naturally lead to trainees becoming more effective helpers to their patients. He claimed that this would lead novice therapists to be able to help the client to accept and appreciate themselves in a more experiential way, having undergone this process within themselves and the current study reiterates these ideas. This study supports Robertson’s (1971) ‘naturalistic’ approach to therapy training, which is inherently celebratory of the trainee, stating true helping ability to be innate to novice therapists, and asserting the requirement of training to be merely the accessing of this.

Fauth and Williams (2005), talked about the necessity of trainees being able to assess when ‘enough is enough’ in terms of reflexivity, self-analysis and personal development. It is the assertion of the current study that this must be made explicit in training programs that seek to facilitate personal development. My research builds on the ideas of Fauth and Williams (2005), suggesting that the training process specifically incorporate self-esteem work, be dogmatic about the need for self-care practices and work towards minimising the attitude of ‘selfless martyrdom’ which can exist in those individuals who choose to undertake training in the helping professions. Zimmerman, Kachele, Moller and Sell (2012), referred to ‘introject affiliation’ as being the way in which trainees relate to and treat themselves. They found that increased levels of introject affiliation, which came about through effective personal therapy, led to increased levels of self-efficacy, which had a positive effect on therapeutic outcomes. It is conceivable that trainees being made aware of this type of research, which empirically demonstrates that treating oneself well as the therapist, will have advantageous outcomes in terms of the therapy one practices, can have an impact on trainees attitudes towards the training process and can facilitate self-care practices from the perspective not just of ethics, but of utility.

While the current study does not advocate reflective writing in an unstructured form as being highly advantageous for personal development, it puts forward
some recommendations for how such a tool can become an effective means of accomplishing this goal. Its utility in terms of professional development and the formulation of a theory of practice has been discussed, while its utility for personal development has been less conclusive. This might, however, be consistent with the ambiguous nature of personal development as a phenomenon and with the fact that, in this context, the researcher was the participant. Perhaps, therefore, I cannot fully distance myself from my own personal development to enough of an extent to comment in a wholly objective fashion on the changes which have taken place, and will continue to take place, in my personality. I currently view the exploration of my own feelings as having had a role in exacerbating some of the personal and professional stressors with which I was dealing throughout my training experience. However, it is also conceivable, and perhaps even quite likely, that it was the engaging with this process in such an earnest and enthusiastic manner, which assisted me in emerging from the experience relatively unscathed.

As I spoke about earlier in the discussion chapter I have continued to keep a reflective journal since the completion of the thematic analysis, despite my alleged misgivings about the journalling process. I believe that it says something useful about the value that I found in the journalling process that when I no longer had to keep a reflective journal as part of my training and my research I continue to do so. I now keep a journal in a much more structured fashion which does not facilitate the same level of rumination that my earlier journalling did. I write in a manner that functions to create a more explicit way of relating to myself in an imaginary therapeutic relationship. This gives me a sounding board, to reflect something back, in a style more akin to the process of psychotherapy.

I have included an example of my current reflective journal in the appendices (see appendix 7) to demonstrate how different my current reflective process is to the one that I used throughout the research process. Pennebaker (1997), found that the benefits of reflective writing came in the form of writers being able to re-evaluate their situations, label feelings and make decisions about actions
to take. The way in which I journal now has evolved into an almost Socratic conversation with myself where I ask myself to label my emotions, acknowledge what's really going on in a situation, and make suggestions for alternative interpretations and actions. My reflective entries are now briefer, more to the point, and I believe my current process facilitates entry into the 'zone of reflection' (Rochlen, Zack & Speyer, 2004) more efficiently. What I have come to believe about the process of keeping a reflective journal is that it can be a beneficial, useful and ethical exercise, however its advantages are not inherent to it. In the same way that psychotherapy is useful, however talking about one's feelings and one's problems with an untrained individual may not have any utility, and has the potential to be iatrogenic, so too might be the process of unharnessed journalling.

**When should integration take place?: My perspective**

The question of at what point in the training process integration should take place is one that appears repeatedly in the literature on training. In terms of the second research question in the current study, around what contribution my reflective writing can have in terms of training, this issue arose. In relation to the literature around training, it is generally accepted that skills training is insufficient (even by those who advocate it), supervision is useful, personal development in the form of personal therapy is useful (even by those who do not advocate it), the therapeutic relationship is important (even by those who only pay it lip service), and that some type of personal or experiential learning about one's way of being in the therapy room is advantageous. The issue of when integration should take place in training is still a polarising one among theorists, however. Having reflected in such great detail on my process of integration and what was and was not useful for me, I have come to some opinions about training in integrative psychotherapy. Having explored integrative theory deeply and chronicled my own journey towards integration I have developed some personal awareness that I would like to discuss in terms of this issue. While I may not be able to put forward a revolutionary theoretical concept for integrating at a philosophical level, I can say something about the
process of becoming an integrative psychotherapist. With trainee anxiety, as well as the emotional discomfort felt by the integrative trainee who searches for truth in a post-modern arena, being issues that I reflected on in detail and discussed in my data analysis, I feel that examining these anxieties led me to have a potentially useful perspective on the way integrative training might be harnessed.

Consoli and Jester (2005) argue that integration should be the goal for learning from the beginning, whereas Castonguay (2005) contends that a focus on theoretical integration that is premature can have the potential of promoting a learning about theories that is superficial rather than in depth. As a means of overcoming the emotional attachments that lead therapists to dismiss theoretically competing approaches, as discussed by Cooper and McLeod (2011), I would argue the need for training in integration to be integrative from the beginning. It is my opinion that if training in the process of integration is not constantly holding the end goal of integration in its sights, then it is potentially doing its trainees a disservice. While it is necessary for trainees to explore, on a very philosophical level, the models with which they are working, students must be made aware that this is a subordinate objective to the superordinate destination of integration. This can be seen in much the same way as the need for personal development to be held as a sub-goal of professional development, so as to not get lost in the process or to view it as an end in and of itself. This is not a recommendation which should result in a less theoretically rigorous analysis of therapeutic approaches, but rather a call for the acknowledgement of the reality of how education functions in all contexts. If a specific component of a training program has a certain weighting of marks allotted, producing an exceptional piece of work around one component will not allow an exemption from other areas of the training. In my research, integration was held as the objective throughout the journaling process and this led to the findings in terms of professional development to have a relatively coherent outcome. It is my belief that we cannot expect an educational process to be highly advantageous if the overarching goal is overlooked throughout the process only to be introduced at the end point, with the expectation that a meaningful synthesis of knowledge can occur in an ad-hoc fashion.
This call for the context of the learning to be held in awareness throughout the learning process is echoed by Lampropoulos (2006), when he talks about an appreciation that he came to early on, of the essence of integration and the importance of the common factors. He discussed how he was able to acknowledge this at the beginning of his training, immerse himself in various theories, before returning to common factors at the end of his process, to amalgamate the learning. A noteworthy question here, is whether the way in which we go about integrating might have an effect on the types of integrationists we become. For Lampropoulos, his attitude towards integration was consistent with the school of integration with which he ended up identifying. In relation to the philosophy of common factors, his assertion that integration should run through integration training is consistent. But while this notion might prove to be consistent with common factors, theoretical integration or even technical eclecticism, it might fundamentally disagree with the assumptions of assimilative integration. For assimilative integrationists, a detailed knowledge, and favouring of one approach over others is the basis of their philosophy (Messer, 1992). Therefore, in order for us to state, at the beginning of our training, how we want to learn about integration, we must, on some level already have made some choices about the type of integrationist we intend to be at the end of our experience, in the same way that Lampropoulos (2006), was drawn to the common factors approach from the outset. This is difficult to reconcile, as novice therapists, by their very nature are just that, novices, and cannot be expected to predict how they will experience what they will learn before they have learned it.

This study makes the claim that integrative philosophy should harness integrative training, and that the context of the learning should be held in awareness throughout the learning process. This concurs with the ideas of Consoli and Jester, (2005). While this view is based on the learning that took place for me through undertaking the current research, it might also be based on my own subjective experience. I identify with theoretical integration and the common factors to facilitate this and my claims are made in the context of this belief system. My subjective experience has also been one of integration from
the outset, with my undergraduate education, my masters degree and my
counselling training prior to my doctoral studies, having all been integrative from
the beginning. That being said, however, I would claim my recommendations to
largely fall into the category of detached logic at this point and that it would
appear counter-intuitive, and indeed theoretically inconsistent, for integrative
training to ever be anything other than integrative.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter presented the learning which came from the heuristic
analysis of my reflective journal, discussing findings around themes describing
my experience as a therapist trainee. I then examine how heuristics can
function to aid in the process of integration and personal development. The
learning was then discussed in terms of its positioning in the literature on
psychotherapy and training. Implications of the findings in terms of training were
then proposed, and overall, experiential learning was claimed to be of
importance. Resulting from the analysis of the findings, this study makes the
claim that integration should occur at the beginning of training and run
throughout the experience. As mentioned earlier, a dialogue on implications for
psychotherapy practice and training ran throughout this chapter, and is
consolidated in the conclusion section.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

Introduction

In conclusion, the current study has a number of implications for practice and training, strengths and limitations and makes claims for the future research in this area. These will be discussed below. While some of these points have been initially explored in the discussion section, they will be further elaborated upon below. The implications will be discussed in terms of answering the first research question, in 'Implications of the research: outcomes at a personal level', and the second research question in 'Implications of the research: developing an integrative axiom', and 'The utility of heuristic analysis of journaling for professional development', 'Implications of the research: the utility of heuristic analysis of journaling for professional development'. Strengths, limitations and future directions are then explored in relation to the implications.

Implications of the research: Outcomes at a personal level

The implications for my research must be discussed within the context of the two research questions that I was seeking to answer. These questions were 1) what was my personal experience of constructing an integrative theory of practice? and 2) what contribution can my heuristic investigation of reflective writing offer to integrative psychotherapy training?

The implications in terms of my personal experience of constructing an integrative theory of practice are unsurprisingly unique and idiosyncratic. The first personal implication is that I am now, I hope, a more competent and confident therapist. I feel that I have moved from doing a job that I cannot describe, to doing a job that I don't feel the need to defend as much. I feel that I
now have an awareness, on an experiential level, of what psychotherapy is for me as a therapist. Going into this study I was hoping to learn how to 'practice therapy' however I might have instead learned how to 'be a therapist'. I am now more comfortable with what I communicate to clients just by being with them. I am comfortable sitting in silence with my clients when they tell me that they're just not able to talk about it right now. I no longer feel the need to always make a specific intervention when a client begins to cry, feeling comfortable that my presence is sufficient and my empathy is communicated through my behaviour, at a deeper level than words. I am confident enough to touch a client when it seems appropriate rather than holding back my affection for fear of being classified an unethical practitioner. This sense of confidence as a therapist comes from the experience I had using a heuristic process to analyse my reflective writing in order to construct an integrative theory of practice. I now know what I think therapy is. That is the most important thing that came out of this research for me, personally. Now that I know what I think therapy is, I can know what I feel therapy as, also. I can experience therapeutic moments being therapeutic, while being able to label them intellectually as using the relationship to facilitate self-esteem. Having this integrative axiom functions as a defence against my internal critic. When my internal critic asks me, while I'm practicing therapy, 'what the hell are you doing?' - I can tell him.

The second personal implication that I would like to discuss is a change in my personality that came about as a result of engaging in this project. I am now more in touch with my anxieties and I am potentially a less relaxed or 'chilled out' man than the one who entered into this research. I went into this project as a pragmatic, solution-focused person who could be considered relatively carefree. I would describe myself now as being more congruent with my emotions and acknowledging my feelings to a greater degree. Much like a client who has had a meaningful therapeutic experience, I now no longer feel the need to 'be okay' in order to make those around me feel relaxed. I feel that this had made me more genuine in the relationships with the significant people in my life and allows me to enter more authentically into therapeutic relationships. That being said however, I do, in retrospect, feel that I too deeply engaged in my own internal world during this research and that immersing myself in my
feelings to such a great extent was harmful to me. Because of my somewhat obsessive nature, I began to court unpleasant emotions in order to analyse them, thinking that I could come to some revolutionary, profound learning by being unhappy.

Having emerged from my heuristic cocoon, I have regained a kind of emotional equilibrium. I am not as relaxed a person as I was before this project, but I am also not as emotional as I was during it. My emotions are now acknowledged and thought about without them necessarily having to take centre stage by default. I find my Buddhist practice now more fulfilling than I once did, and I find it easier to cultivate an intimacy with my own interiority. Being alone no longer makes me uncomfortable. Nevertheless I have re-emerged into the world after spending so much time inside my head, with a potentially more balanced way of being.

**Implications of the research: Developing an integrative axiom**

The main implications of the research in terms of answering the second research question in the current study around the contribution my heuristic investigation of reflective writing offers to integrative psychotherapy training, are to do with my process of integration using an axiomatic truth.

The findings of my research in terms of the practice of integrative psychotherapy, revolve around my opinion that I needed an integrative goal of therapy to be held in awareness while integration of other theories and techniques occur around this. In this respect, some of the theories of practice which might be more directive or might position the therapist as the expert can be integrated and held in awareness and I make the claim that theories or techniques which are integrated into the therapeutic process should attempt to move away from any interventions which have the potential to interfere with one's integrative foundations. Decisions to undertake therapeutic interventions such as working with resistance to therapy, challenging the patient, exploring
uncompleted homework assignments and not answering personal questions, while not inappropriate to be used by an integrative therapist, might need to be considered in relation to the therapists philosophical axiom of therapy. I found utility in having a guiding axiom, a personal common factor which can be verbalised easily and simply by the practitioner as a means of harnessing the ambiguities that exist around theoretical and technical integration. Even if the axiom differs from that found in the current research, I posit the necessity of theoretically consistent interventions that come from a guiding axiom. This would impact training, with trainee’s being encouraged to define an overarching philosophical truism at the completion of their training. This would also have implications for qualified, experienced therapists in terms of supervision and continued professional development. Supervision could involve the assessment of the therapist's potential to change their belief system throughout their career, and to assess whether their practice continues to be consistent with this.

**Implications of the research: The utility of heuristic analysis of journaling for professional development**

The current research found the heuristic analysis of reflective journaling to function as a useful and theoretically consistent means of bringing about a distillation of complex philosophical learning. For integrative doctoral therapist training, this study puts forward the idea that such a process might be utilised to facilitate and assess professional development. While professional development in counselling psychology in the UK is assessed informally through fitness to practice exercises and supervision, and in a more formal manner through evidencing standards of proficiency for accreditation by the Health Professions Council, there is currently no formalised structure in place to evaluate the theoretical component of Counselling Psychology training. While trainee’s complete theoretical papers and reflective assignments, an suggestion of this research as regards professional development is that it be assessed, not just by how trainee’s practice, but how they theoretically orient their practice, specifically, using reflective writing and heuristics, or potentially an alternative form of thematic analysis to facilitate this. This recommendation aims to address
a disparity that can be considered to exist currently between the rigour of the assessment of research as compared with the assessment of the theory and practice components of training in counselling psychology.

**Strengths of the research**

The most noteworthy strength of the current research is its trustworthiness in relation to data generation and data analysis.

**Data generation: Quantity and quality**

The quantity of the data gathered is something that can be considered to provide the findings of the current study some clout in terms of making a meaningful contribution to training and practice. Three reflective journals were analysed, which were maintained consistently throughout the training process, totalling 287 pages and approximately 98,000 words. In their investigation of trainee’s development of a theory of practice, Fitzpatrick, Kovalak and Weaver (2010) analysed the reflective journals of 17 novice therapists, looking at 8 entries made over 12 weeks, and found this to be an insufficient amount of data. The current research responds to their call for a more in-depth analysis of the complexities of the experience. While the data was gathered from only one trainee’s experience, the data generation was comprehensive and entries were both frequent, (occurring almost daily for most of the time during the training) and in-depth, (with some of the more salient entries being up to 4,000 words long).

**Data analysis: Reliability of interpretation**

Heuristic inquiry is subjective yet rigorous and is evaluated by the criteria of trustworthiness and verisimilitude (Keeling & Bermudez, 2006). Heuristics usually involves the researcher unearthing tacit, subjective knowledge on the
experience they have had, conducting some form of interviews with their participants or co-researchers. In the current study, the researcher and the participant were one and the same, and the analysis by the researcher took place on my own reflective writings. This can be considered a significant advantage that the current study has over other forms of qualitative research, in that, it can be argued with a level of certainty that the subjective meaning of the participant was not lost in the interpretation. While it can be claimed that in qualitative research, the desires and interests of the researcher might influence how they choose to delineate the date into themes and how there might be a danger of the interpretation becoming overly subjective in, in order for participants meanings to fit with the general thrust of what is being researched, this was not the case here. While a process of distancing took place, in the form of an incubatory stage between completion of the data generation and the data analysis taking place, upon revisiting the data I was able to recall the intentions of my original writings, and what I had been attempting to communicate, whilst also having enough distance to be sufficiently interpretive about the relevance of what the participant version of myself was communicating. In order to facilitate this move from participant to researcher, I somewhat altered my personality and the way in which I presented myself, moving from an identity as a thoughtful and perhaps overly reflective philosopher, to a persona of a more rigorous researcher.

Limitations of the research and improvements

This research was not without its limitations, most of them existing around its subjectivity and generalisability. As there was only one participant and the participant was the researcher, there was potential that, despite precautions being taken, the inherent focus on subjectivity would lead to a project that was of little interest to anyone but the researcher. The main limitation therefore, is the extent to which any findings from the current study might be generalisable in any useful way and that my unique experience of becoming an integrative practitioner might be just that - entirely unique, with no useful learning to impart. While I maintain that some of my findings may have some generalisable value I acknowledge that that too is a subjective interpretation on my part.
Were researchers to undertake similar studies in the future, some improvements to the research design could be implemented which have emerged as a result of carrying out this investigation. There are relatively few alterations that could be made to the research to make it function as being more generalisable as the argument for qualitative research and in particular, heuristics is to capture in-depth participant's experience (Moustakas, 1990). Should this be the goal of the researcher, however, it might be advisable to recruit a fellow trainee or a supervisor to member check their themes. For this to occur the participant would have to consent to all of their reflective writing being viewed by another person, in order for the importance and relevance of their themes to be agreed upon and this is might limit their ability or desire to write candidly.

Another limitation of this research and a reason that this external member-checking process would not have been appropriate in this situation was the quantity of data produced. While the substantial data facilitated in-depth exploration of the experience, the amount data produced was impractical with regards data analysis. It is arguable that a similar depth of theoretical exploration could have been facilitated had less data being produced. And improvements to the study would be a limitation put on the amount of reflective writing produced. This would also overcome the ethical limitations of the study, safeguarding future participants from the potentially re-traumatising experience that Martin (2002) argues can be associated with heuristic enquiry.

**Future directions for research**

A number of future directions for research emerged from the current study, regarding research on training and practice. An exploration of the utility of self-esteem in effective psychotherapy would elaborate on the findings of this study. A recommendation that comes from this study is for a qualitative analysis of patients who have undergone successful psychotherapy, involving semi-structured interviews, exploring the meaning that they gave to self-esteem and
the extent to which they constructed it as being useful or not in terms of their experience of therapeutic change. This might also be facilitated by a larger scale quantitative study, exploring the ratings that patients gave on the self-esteem questions on psychometric tests and how this related to overall therapeutic improvements.

Other recommendations for future research are around the continued researching of psychotherapy training and further investigating the claims of the my study. A recommendation for aiding this investigation would be the use of semi-structured interviews on doctoral counselling psychology trainees who have undergone previous therapy training, but whose present training program utilises reflective writing. The proposed research would analyse conversations around the utility of journaling rather than analysing the reflective journals themselves and would attempt to compare previous learning experiences without a heavy reflective component, to their training which does put emphasis on it. Therefore, trainees who have experienced theoretical and personal learning without reflective writing, as well as with it, can meaningfully make comparisons between the two experiences. As Garfield and Kurtz (1976) found that those trainees who engaged in therapy rated its utility higher than those who had not, the proposed research should therefore not compare trainees who journal with trainees who don't, but rather would seek to interview trainees who have had experience of both approaches to learning.

Finally this research makes recommendations for more qualitative research into the area of personal development, and in particular, the explicit utility with which it is rated by recently qualified psychologists. A proposed research design might involve comparing recently qualified counselling psychologists with recently qualified clinical psychologists in terms of their opinions on personal development. As clinical psychology training does not have the same explicit emphasis on personal development, but awards an equivalent therapeutic qualification, it would be useful to discover the meaning that both groups give to this phenomenon and to find out how each group of trainees evaluated the philosophy of their program. What would be of additional interest in such research, is the evaluation that both groups gave to the alternative philosophy.
How might clinical psychologists feel about the emphasis put on personal development by counselling psychology and how would counselling psychologists evaluate the idea of a training program with less of an introspective focus?

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, this chapter has discussed the implications of the current research for practice, training and future research. Discussion took place on the utility of heuristic analysis of journaling for professional development, and its potential problems for personal development. It looked at the strengths of the current research, in the form of the trustworthiness that was facilitated by the quantity of data produced and the reliability of interpretation that occurred as a result of the researcher being the participant. The limitations pointed out were around the subjective nature of the research and the pragmatic drawbacks of analysing such a large quantity of data. Future directions for research were outlined in the form of further qualitative research looking into self-esteem and therapy outcomes, comparing experiences of trainee’s who have experienced training both with and without a reflective component and comparing practitioners who’s training had a reflective focus, with those whose training did not.

From a personal standpoint, although I argued the emotional distress that may come about as a result of research of this nature, I feel that in the future, the learning about myself that transpired as a result of undertaking this project will likely become more meaningful to me. I must repeat that I found the project extremely helpful in becoming a competent practitioner. I conclude by saying that, was I given the option to undertake this research again, knowing then what I know now, I would likely accept the challenge, once again, however in a substantially less harmful fashion.
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Appendices

Appendix 1

Information Sheet, Statement of Intent and Consent Form

Research: An evaluation of heuristic inquiry as a means of managing personal development and theoretical learning within the process of becoming an integrative Counselling Psychologist.

What is this information sheet/consent form?

This is an information sheet and consent form for my research project. My research will be submitted for the partial completion of the Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology, and it will take place on myself. As the participant and researcher in this study, it has been necessary to make a clear delineation between my role as a researcher and my role as a participant. In order to facilitate this process, I have created this document as a way of informing myself, in clearer, more concrete terms, of the nature of my research, and in order to obtain formal consent from myself. This document functions as a statement of intent, to formalise the processes that will be undertaken in my research, to fully outline the potential risks and to officially consent to the process. I will discuss the aim of the research, the research method used, what my participation will entail, what will constitute the data, and how it will be kept in a confidential manner. Also discussed in this document is the duration and location of the research and the future publication possibilities.

Once I have clearly outlined the research process, I will read through the consent form and statement of intent before signing. It will function as a clear reminder to myself what the research will involve as well as a means of me officially consenting to this potentially emotionally taxing process.

What is aim of the research?

The aim of the research is twofold. It functions to document and understand the process of becoming an integrative practitioner. It seeks to explore how trainees learn about practice and integrate theories, a process for which there is currently no overarching and cohesive paradigm.

The second area of investigation within the current research is the utility of a heuristic analysis of a learning journal in the process of self-directed doctoral-level learning. Under investigation is how it can be of use in developing a theory of practice for those learning to become integrative practitioners, as well as its potential utility in wider training contexts.
About the research method:

The research will involve heuristic analysis of my reflective journal. Keeping a reflective journal is standard practice on a Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology. The reflective journal is focused around learning theoretical integration, and is used on training courses to facilitate personal development. The reflective journal constitutes the data in the current research.

The data analysis used will be heuristics (Moustakas, 1990), a method of research which uncovers unconscious, tacit awareness from the researcher. It involves the researcher carrying out an analysis of research with which he/she has a deep personal connection. In this case, it is the process of becoming an integrative psychologist. The researcher conducts an in-depth analysis at the data before retreating from the analysis in order to allow unconscious, revelatory information to come forth. Themes will be taken from the journal to produce a creative synthesis outlining the findings of the study. The focus will be on the process of the trainee therapist rather than clients with and significant others, therefore confidentiality will be maintained.

What does my participation in this research entail?

I am both the researcher and sole participant in the current research.

What happens to the data collected?

The collected data, my journals, will be stored securely and confidentially in my home for the duration of the research.

How is confidentiality maintained?

All efforts will be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained. As mentioned above, the journals will be stored securely and confidentially for the duration of the research. When quoting or referring to the journal, any identifying information regarding people written about in the journals will be anonymised. These safeguards are in compliance with the University of Manchester regulations on data protection.

Informed consent and 'opting out' in research conducted on the researcher.

Participation in this research is voluntary. It is an unusual situation, in that the participant is also the researcher, and therefore benefits from participation.
In most consent forms, it is stated that the participant may withdraw at any time and that this decision would have no negative consequences for them. This is not the case in the current research, and so, I hereby state my own awareness of this issue, and that I enter into the research process with full knowledge, that using my own reflective journal as data means that my own withdrawal from the research would result in my not completing the professional doctorate qualification. Entering into this form of research, I understood that conducting research on oneself was not a compulsory part of the Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology, and that undertaking such a research project was entirely my own choice.

I am also aware that should I so choose, I can remove myself from the research and not complete the Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology, should this be what I deem to be most advantageous for my emotional well-being. In the unlikely event that I choose to withdraw I take full responsibility for the ramifications.

What is the duration of the research?

The duration of the research is the three year span of the doctorate program. The reflective journal, as a standard component of the program, has already been completed.

Where will the research be conducted?

The journaling will take place in my home, the university and my clinical placement. As the journaling is standard practice within the personal development component of the program, I will not be engaging in practice which differs significantly from that of any other trainee. The analysis of the journals will also take place in my home.

Will the outcomes of the study be published?

The outcomes of the study will form part of a doctoral dissertation, and therefore may be subject to further publication in academic journals. As detailed above, in these publications, all writings will be anonymised.

Contact for further information:

Researcher and participant:
Cathal O’Connor, trainee counselling psychologist at the University of Manchester
Can be contacted via the School of Education at the University

Supervisor:
Dr Clare Lennie, Lecturer in Counselling Psychology
Email: clare.lennie@manchester.ac.uk

Research:

Consent Form
If you are happy to participate please complete and sign the consent form below

Please Initial Box

- I confirm that I have read the information sheet on the above project and have had the opportunity to consider the information carefully. X

3. I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time X

4. I agree to have anonymised quotes from my reflective journal used in the dissertation and future publications X

I understand the potential risks of the research and have suitable safeguards in place. X

I agree to take part in the above project:

Name of participant: Cathal O'Connor Date: 31/01/12 Signature: Cathal O'Connor
Appendix 2

The data corpus: My reflective journals
Appendix 3

The initial list of points that reoccur in the data corpus:

01 - Trainee anxiety
02 - CBT anxiety
03 - Comfort with the person centred approach
04 - Difficulty working in the specific placement setting
05 - Relationship with my parents
06 - Issues with my girlfriend
07 - Relating to clients versus relating to significant others
08 - My relationship with my supervisor(s)
09 - Procrastination
10 - My childhood
11 - My identity as an ex-‘artist’
12 - My discomfort with boredom
13 - My relationship with Manchester
14 - My relationship with my emotions
15 - The utility of journalling
16 - Resentment
17 - Setting boundaries
18 - Ex-girlfriends
19 - Feeling trapped/curtailment of freedom
20 - Loyalty
21 - Feelings - Simple or complex?
22 - My personality
23 - Seeking approval and validation
24 - Stress in therapy sessions
25 - Problem solving
26 - What is psychotherapy?
27 - My identity as a non-conformist
28 - Endings in therapy
29 - Journalling making me feel worse
30 - Self esteem's role in therapy
31 - Control
32 - My personal therapy
33 - Congruence versus empathy
34 - Integrating philosophically opposing theories
35 - Feeling like a fraud as a therapist
36 - My spontaneity and impulsivity
37 - Behaviour versus emotion
38 - The way my process of journalling evolved
39 - Complaining about people I don't like
40 - Self-esteem's role in integration
41 - Difficulty in identifying feelings
42 - Transference and countertransference in therapy
43 - Positivism versus post-modernism
44 - Psychodynamic psychotherapy is overlooked
45 - My personality – why do I seem so chilled out?
46 - My self esteem and their self-esteem
47 - The core conditions – necessary but not sufficient?
48 - Are feelings pointless?
49 - Searching for truth
50 - Freud was totally right
51 - Is there such thing as truth?
52 - Am I too mean to be a therapist?
53 - How my best friends see me
54 - Freud was totally wrong
55 - Am I an obsessive neurotic?
56 - It's all about the relationship
57 - What is a post-modern truth?
58 - The common factors
59 - An underlying truth of psychotherapy?
60 - How do my reflections manifest in my therapy?
61 - Returning to my person-centred centre
62 - The wider utility of my reflections
63 - Do I really want to be a psychologist?
64 - Being action oriented
65 - My changing as a result of reflecting
66 - Am I a closet positivist?
67 - Making sense of theoretical ambiguity
68 - A 'truth' for integration
69 - Is the therapeutic relationship irrelevant?
70 - The importance of not being earnest
71 - Am I just becoming a naval gazer?
72 - The meaning of life is happiness
Appendix 4

Examples of coding

Procrastination

It is to get resolved. I need to sort out my
well. I need to move out of that depressing apartment. I
need to exercise more. I need to live in the moment.

Most importantly, I need to start today to stop procrastinating.

That’s it. That’s my biggest problem. It’s procrastinating.

It’s what keeps me from being happy. I need to get organized.

I need to get organized. I need to stop procrastination.

As of today, as of the 8th March 2011,

to stop procrastinating. Why do I do it? Is it just that I actually get from procrastination? Seriously... What?

I get off slightly unpleasant experiences in the next
decade. I have an experience to build up and take
an added importance. Is it so scary I can get that
feeling of extreme relief when I do it? Is it? Because
maybe I feel like I can make feel too much. If

I call my days on the debit card, I feel in good shape
when they want to be, or when I leave my job application
or my interview presentation or my dissertation to the
last minute. I got to live on the edge. I get the
contrast that I crave — and that is huge. I can read
my life from getting boring. That’s why I do what I do.
I can let the ups accumulate in my apartment until

feel sick. Until the build up is so vast that I have to
build up. Then I do it and I get a relief that is

exhilarating. That is intense. I love in extreme ness, even extreme

and the contrast excites me. Now travel on.

Okay, so I’m on the plane home to London. I’m
feeling mixed. I don’t know why I’m feeling
why am I so stuck at figuring out how I feel at any

given time? Are we all just quite stuck at knowing how

we feel and what we really want? Maybe we’re all just

a bit confused about everything. Life is just a series of

Procrastination
and I hate that about you. How dare you act like that about my cancer.

20/02/2012

I wish I was CBT. There, I said it. I wish I was for a reason. Mainly, I wish that I knew what the f**k I was doing. Sometimes, I wish I knew how far along in the process we were, or whether we had achieved the objectives we set out to achieve. I feel shit. Absolutely shit. Just still having everything needing therapy & what it can do to me, it can do good in the world, but it's just eating away at me. I feel like I need to be calmer today, to get my sh*t in order, but I can't. I feel like I can't control my anxiety. I don't know where I am, and I want to be able to define what is happening while it is happening, but that is not necessarily what happens and that is not real life, and you know what? That is not therapy. Lost, threaded anxiety.

For fuck's sake, it's real.

My life doesn't - in fact usually it does the opposite. But when we have those "lazy days" like we had yesterday it confuses me. It's like I can feel the call of the cat, and her energy, and it misses me off. I am full of energy and wanting to do things, and she just shakes around. Yesterday I was trying to tidy my
Appendix 5

Example of thematic map
Appendix 6

List of candidate themes

- Trainee anxiety
- Fear of boredom
- Procrastination
- CBT anxiety
- Making sense of theoretical ambiguity
- The underlying truth of psychotherapy
- Relating to clients versus relating to significant others
- Practically applying my journalling to therapy
- Self-esteem as an integrative axiom
- The therapeutic relationship
Appendix 7

Excerpt from my current reflective journal (post research)