THE NEEDS OF FET LEARNERS FOR PERSONAL WELL-BEING

by

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I declare that **"The needs of FET learners for personal well-being"** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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L.V. MOTHAMAHA (Mrs)   **DATE**

Dedication

To Mafoka, my husband for his love, support and encouragement. To my daughter, Nthabeleng who placed all her trust and pride in me throughout this project. To my son, Paballo for his adoration.

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SUMMARY

<mark>Personal well-being is a state that involves feelings and thoughts.</mark> This concept is investigated in learning area Life Orientation and integrated in the curriculum as a learning outcome for Further Education and Training learners in grades 10-12. A literature study was done to discuss/clarify dimensions of personal well-being that is general subjective, psychological, social and spiritual well-being and mental health. Perspectives, theories, principles and features pertaining to well-being were investigated from an international and local context. An exploratory study used a qualitative approach to investigate and observe perceptions of a small sample of learners of personal well-being. Data gathering used focus groups which completed structured group work activities. The results indicate that learner participants have needs to be satisfied to reach a sense of personal well-being. Based on findings, recommendations regarding coping strategies, intervention strategies and support were made.

KEY TERMS:

Personal well-being, general well-being, subjective well-being, psychological well-being, mental health, humanistic psychology, cognitive, affective, mental state, adolescence, focus groups, group work, awareness phase, exploration phase, personalisation phase, needs, self-evaluation, self-judgement.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION, ORIENTATION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Personal well-being is central to fulfilling one's potential; it also enables learners to engage effectively in interpersonal relationships, community life and society. Personal well-being focuses on self-concept, emotional literacy, social competency and life skills. It seeks to deal with the realities of peer pressure, factors influencing quality of life and the dynamics of relationships (National Curriculum Statement 2003: 7).

Is well-being too subjective a phenomenon to be tackled by scientific research? Perhaps not, since the question "How are you?" is easily answered. It seems people are aware of the quality of their lives, simply by 'feeling' it and if we can feel it, then perhaps it can be reported validly about. Schumck and Sheldon (2001) aimed their study at focusing on trait or general well-being, which refers to one's average emotional well-being, spanning at least weeks and often months or years (Schumck & Sheldon 2001: 7).

The research focuses on personal well-being in general as perceived or experienced by an individual. It concentrates on various components or essences of well-being in order to draw a holistic picture. Learners in the educational context form the focus group because it is essential to listen to their reflection on perception of their personal well-being.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

1.2.1 Awareness of the problem

Society and its components which range from family and local community to a school community, shows signs of ignorance and a state of apathy towards the importance of personal well-being. It seems as if there is a lack of public knowledge regarding the importance of personal well-being, neither does society know that personal well-being

is a human right which needs full recognition for it to come into its own. Only once this fact is known and recognised will it be possible to aspire to the goal of personal well-being (Prilletensky & Nelson 2002: 10-11).

Personal well-being deals with learners' feelings, emotions, values and attitudes. If these are satisfied, it is possible for learners to develop holistically. However, the problem, which I have observed is that personal well-being, is not attained due to environmental deprivation in society, the local community and the school community.

Society's lack of respect for personal well-being is reflected by the loose set of rules that exists in society. Hence personal well-being is not nurtured or protected, and its development appears to be a futile exercise. Educating learners for personal well-being is not seen as a priority. This relegates it to a waste of time that cannot be catered for during contact teaching time. The societal situation does not allow positive growth and development towards personal well-being. Some learners undergo traumatic experiences such as discrimination, poverty and even abuse in the hands of those who are supposed to protect and nurture them. The result is that learners are deprived of support and nurturing, and are thus unable to experience a sense of personal well-being (Prilletensky & Nelson 2002: 11).

The holistic context of the learners is illustrated in Figure 1.1. Society is described as a community of people living together in a group or nation (Oxford School Dictionary. 2003 s.v. "society": 420). The concept of community refers to people, such as learners and their parents, living in one area or a group with similar interests or origins and "local" refers to belonging to a particular place. Therefore, the school community is drawn from the society, which is constituted by the local community. They have same beliefs or style of work (Oxford School Dictionary.2003 s.v. "society, community, local and school": 49, 259 & 392).

As can be seen in figure 1.1 attaining personal well-being is hampered by severe pressures, which originate from the society, local community, family and school community. The local community is not in the position to support efforts made by the few community members who want to help learners gain personal well-being. These

efforts are met with criticism, negativity and intimidation that make it even harder to realise personal well-being.

Figure 1.1: Learners' holistic context

The personal well-being of a learner is also not easily addressed in a school community because of lack of a support system to make timely intervention, which will help learners to retain whatever is left of their personal well-being. Learners who need to experience personal well-being are faced with fears, threats, intimidation and being excluded because of trauma and abuse from society, family and the classroom (Prilletensky & Nelson 2002: 12). In the classroom, I became aware that learners, who experienced all these above, lose their sense of personal well-being, as it is too fragile to survive the onslaught from society, the local community and parents. Such negative experiences have a negative impact on the tender and fragile personal well-being of learners, leaving the learners violated.

Violated personal well-being is identified by a faulty belief system. Learners might exhibit overt behavioural problems, irrationality, and substance abuse. When a sense of personal well-being is disturbed, learners may show weakened egos and the frequent use of defence mechanisms in order to protect their disintegrating personal well-being. A lack of personal well-being seems to lead to an inability to engage in interpersonal relationships, community life and society. Negative self-identity with a poor self-concept, negative self-image, social incompetence, lack of confidence and a lack of coping skills might feature in a failed sense of personal well-being (Van Niekerk & Prins 2001: 24-25).

Societal factors make it difficult for learners to achieve personal well-being such as peer pressure, drugs that are readily available, teenage pregnancy, sexually-transmitted infections which include HIV and AIDS and the lack of facilities for personal, community, and environmental health (National Curriculum Statement 2003: 9). Learners are not aware that it is their right to have a sense of personal well-being that is closely linked to human rights. Violation of human rights hinders development or growth of a strong personal well-being. Such learners cannot reach their potential nor actualise themselves in their particular stage of development (Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy 2001: 14).

My awareness of the learners' ignorance about their right to human dignity, which manifests in a lack of personal well-being, has stimulated this research. Education needs to address learners' needs regarding the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes they require to develop and sustain personal well-being

1.2.2 Analysis of the problem

Educating learners is the main basic aim of schooling. It is a service to the community and to the country. By educating learners for their personal well-being, the educational process is taken a step further. For the purpose of this study, only formal education at the Further Education and Training level (FET) that is structured in the curriculum was investigated.

The FET curriculum for Life Orientation (LO) was used as a vehicle towards educating learners and reaching the set outcome that is personal well-being. It is essential for this study to be located in the curriculum where one can find activities and learning outcomes (objectives) relevant to "educating learners for personal well-being" (National Curriculum Statement 2003: 2).

The curriculum for the new learning area LO includes different subjects. The outcome which the title of this research addresses, namely to address the needs of FET learners for personal well-being is relevant to the subject called Guidance. Thus the focus for this study is the learning area LO that is linked to the subject of Guidance.

1.2.3 Linking the title "the needs of FET learners for personal well-being" to the learning area Life Orientation

Links between the title of this research and the subject LO can be traced from the definition of LO. LO is the study of the self in relation to others and to society. It is aimed at guiding and preparing learners for life and its possibilities (National Curriculum Statement 2003: 7). These aims are reflected in the following statements:

- It applies a holistic approach because it is concerned with the personal, social, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, motor and physical growth and development of learners, and the way in which these dimensions are interrelated and expressed in life.

- The focus is the development of the self-in-society, and this encourages the development of balanced and confident learners who will contribute to a just and democratic society, a productive economy, and an improved quality of life for all.

- Life Orientation addresses knowledge, values, attitudes and skills about the self, the environment, responsible citizenship, a healthy and productive life, social engagement, recreation and physical activity and career choices.

- It equips learners to solve problems, to make informed decisions and choices and to take appropriate actions to enable them to live meaningfully and successfully in a rapidly changing society (National Curriculum Statement 2003: 7).

- Educating learners by using this learning area will involve an inclusive approach whereby all the facets of personal growth/development will be explored so that learners can reach the outcome personal well-being.

- Personal well-being expected will look at growth in all facets like the personal, social, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, motor and physical. Learners' well-being will be balanced and confident and they will face challenges in this changing world.

- Learners will be empowered to use their talents to achieve their full physical, intellectual, personal, emotional and social potential.

- Learners will develop the skills to relate positively and make a contribution to family, community and society, while reaching fulfilment in their personal well-being (National Curriculum Statement 2003: 8).

From these subject aims it can be concluded that personal well-being can be seen as the overall outcome of LO. In the next section the statement of the problem is formulated.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

For the purpose of this research, the statement of the problem can be formulated as a question:

- What are the FET learners' needs for their personal well-being?

The main question is underpinned by the following sub-questions:

- What are the identified aspects of personal well-being?
- What are the common problems that affect adolescents' personal well-being?
- Can adolescent learners ascertain their needs toward personal well-being?

In the light of this research problem, the following aims of the research are set out.

1.4 AIMS OF THE STUDY

This study encompassed a general aim, namely to establish the needs of the FET learners for their personal well-being. This aim included three secondary aims, which underpinned the general aim of the study.

The general aim was addressed in the literature study and the specific aims were addressed by means of an empirical investigation. A focussed literature study was undertaken which served as a theoretical framework for the research. I identified the essential criteria that define the concept of personal well-being according to the international view, the African perspective and the local notion of personal well-being. Further I ascertained what learners in the FET band need to develop their personal well-being. The literature study informed the empirical research in order to attain the specific aims.

The empirical research examined:

- Whether the FET learners could identify the aspects of personal well-being.
- To what extent learners recognised the common problems that affected their personal well-being.
- Whether the FET learners could ascertain their needs toward personal well-being.

In the following section, the main concepts that are used in my research are clarified.

1.5 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

1.5.1 Learners

The concept of learners means people who constitute the class, persons on whose behalf the educational program exists and operates (Lindgren & Suter 1985: 10). A noun is derived from the verb 'learn'. Based on the meaning of *learn*, learners are these child/adult persons involved in the process of gaining knowledge of (something) or acquiring skills (Concise English Dictionary.1996. s.v. "learn": 477). This study was done using the word "learner" to refer to the adolescents in the FET band who have the need to be educated to reach a sense of personal well-being.

1.5.2 Needs

The concept of needs can be understood in two ways. Firstly, a need is a state of physiological deficit. Many needs, such as thirst, are associated with a drive or motivation, but others such as a need for vitamin C are not. The term has been extended to non-physiological needs such as affiliation and achievement motivation (Stratton & Hayes 1993: 122). An example of this is achievement motivation where the need serves as motivation to accomplish valued goals and to avoid failure. This concept become important as motivation theory becomes less dominated by physiological drives (Stratton & Hayes 1993: 2). An exploration of achievement motivation and related needs is essential for the learners in their growth and development towards personal well-being.

1.5.3 Personal well-being

Personal is an adjective which describes one's own, individual, private quality. It indicates something done or made in person e.g. (made a personal appearance, give personal attention) and it is directed to or concerning an individual (Oxford School Dictionary.2003 s.v. "personal": 324). Well-being literally means a state of being well, healthy, contented (Oxford School Dictionary.2003.s.v. "well-being": 508). In my view, the concept of personal well-being encompasses learners' state-of-being that reflects feeling whole, fulfilled, being content and self-realization of goals which are personally set.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

A brief literature review was done to gain basic information on the problem which was addressed, namely what learners need to grow and develop their personal well-being. The qualitative research method was employed in order to allow multiple views of reality to emerge. This approach also impacted on the relationship between the researcher and the researched. Thus the participants were studied in their natural setting as the researcher reconstructed the meaning that they presented in the natural setting. The qualitative research conducted in this study was aimed at ascertaining the needs of FET learners for personal well-being. As I am an education specialist (facilitator) based in an Education Support Service (ESS) office I realised that FET learners had needs related to their personal well-being.

A secondary objective of qualitative research is to promote better self-understanding and increase insight into the human condition. In qualitative research the emphasis is on improved understanding of human behaviour and experience. It is imperative to understand the ways in which different individuals (learners) make sense of their lives and to describe those meanings. Learners in this study addressed their need for personal well-being during this research.

For the purpose of this study, the following data gathering techniques were used: direct observation, participant observation, naïve sketches and focus group interviews. Direct

observation is prominent, because the researcher needed to study actual cases of human behaviour to be in a position to reflect on the human condition (well-being) with greater clarity (Garbers 1996: 283).

The research took place in Gauteng Province in an Education region (district) close to a metropolitan city. The area serviced by the Education department is mainly made up of townships that are densely populated. The socioeconomic status ranges from very poor to middle-class. Some families cannot afford school fees or even a lunch box for the children. Due to HIV/AIDS some families are headed by children. The research was conducted at one (high school Grade 8-12) in what was once an informal settlement. The school was established due to high number of learners from two primary schools in the area. The choice of the school was based on the number of referrals send to the district Education Support Service (ESS) to intervene to various problems encountered by learners that impact on their well-being.

Participants are FET Grade 10 learners who are mostly withdrawn identified by the Guidance/LO head of department (HoD). The identified state of being 'withdrawn' is probably a good indication of a need for an enhanced balanced well-being for these learner participants. The participants are ten constituted by five boy and five girl learners. Their age group range from 15-19 that encompasses them in their adolescent/teenage years of development. They reflect the cultural mix of the school, which is made-up of black cultural groups being: Tswana, Pedi, Xhosa, Zulu, Tsonga and Venda speaking. Socio-economic background is generally low, highly impoverished due to poverty stricken circumstances of the area itself. The School Governing Body (SGB) chairperson was consulted to enquire about school fund charged. The stipulated R120.00 is hardly paid. The chairperson cited unemployment as the cause and some parents are reluctant to pay because they are ignorant of the children's needs (S.G.B Chairperson. 27.09.05).

The vantage point from which I intend to research my participants' experiences is through group-work. The learners worked together in a group setting to explore essences of well-being as they might experience them. Self-reports were obtained from learners and interviews and naïve sketches were used to probe deeper into their personal well-being. Data analysis involved coding of naïve sketches whereby labelling

was applied to aspects of personal well-being as expressed by the participants. Following types of coding were of use: descriptive, topic and analytic coding (Morse & Richards 2002: 1620). The detailed explanation of the research design is done in chapter 4.

1.7 RESEARCH PROGRAMME

Chapter one provides the introduction and orientation to the problem, namely that the needs of FET learners for personal well-being need to be ascertained from a psycho-educational perspective. The statement of the problem was unpacked into primary and secondary aims: a literature study to obtain background on the factors which enhance well-being; to determine the extent to which learners recognise the importance of well-being as well as the actual needs of South African FET learners regarding well-being.

Chapter two focuses on relevant literature study. Important concepts are examined in detail. A brief overview of international, African and local sources and of related disciplines with an influence to "personal well-being" is provided in this chapter. Various perspectives are referred to in order to gain insight into different facets of personal well-being.

In Chapter three the focus is on the adolescent stage of development of the learners in the FET band. Based on ideal of personal well-being identified as in chapter two, the study explores what needs have been found to pose as problems inhibiting the attainment of personal well-being.

Chapter four explains the research design. It describes and discusses the methods and techniques for data collection and analysis.

Chapter five reports on the findings of the practical research. The data collected from the field, is analysed according to qualitative research methods.

Chapter six deals with interpretation of the findings, conclusions and recommendations based on the concluded research.

1.8 SUMMARY

The introductory orientation this chapter raises concern for the lack of insight about personal well-being. This reflects in the lives of FET learners and necessitates an in-depth study. To gain insight into the concept of well-being, a literature study was undertaken to define personal well-being and to identify the components of the concept. Chapter two deals with the literature which I consulted on the concept of personal well-being.

CHAPTER TWO

PERSONAL WELL-BEING

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the chapter is to do a literature study in which the meaning of the concept personal well-being is ascertained. Various elements of general well-being are discussed. This theoretical information underpins the empirical research in which the level of awareness of educators and learners regarding personal well-being is established, and the need of learners for personal well-being is examined. This links to Marion Dowling's sentiment (2000: 49) that the current thrust towards raising educational standards is in danger of ignoring children's affective development. The education system is seen as a means of satisfying the demands of industry and commerce and thus is mainly interpreted in terms of academic achievement.

A recent Mental Health Foundation report says that one in five young people is suffering from disorders such as anxiety, depression and psychosis (Dowling 2000: 49). The report suggests that the move to raise standards, which is narrowly focused on academic issues, is causing learners distress, and "the nation's children, the country's most important resource, are failing to thrive emotionally" (Dowling 2000: 49). This extract also implicates the plight of the adolescent learner who is in the Further Education and Training band. These secondary school learners struggle to find out who they are as individual entities. This means that they probably also find it hard to identify self and the wellness of their being.

2.2 DEFINITION OF PERSONAL WELL-BEING

From a certain angle, well-being is a simple concept. A moment's reflection provides an answer to the question "Do I feel well?" The answer appears to range from "No, I feel (at varying levels of severity) tired/irritable/anxious/low or in pain" to "Yes, I feel well."
In other ways, the concept is clearly complex, covering a number of other concepts including quality of life, life satisfaction, happiness and morale. Some use it as an

overarching concept, covering emotional and social well-being. Mental well-being has two components: cognitive (thinking clearly, logically and creatively) and affective (feeling, for example, happy, calm or energetic) (Buchanan & Hudson 2000:30). Other conceptions of well-being emphasise individuals' cognitive judgements concerning the quality of their lives, judgements that can be based on many other considerations besides a high positive or a low negative mood.

The concept of life satisfaction is used to emphasise the cognitive components of well-being. Happiness also refers to individuals' global judgements about the quality of their lives (Schmuck & Sheldon 2001: 7). These are primarily subjective states, but the effect of their absence can be observed objectively in people's behaviour and communication. Lack of the two states of well-being might result in the inability to reach and maintain personal well-being of learners. Emotional well-being is concerned only with feelings and is therefore essentially subjective.

Social capital, which is an aspect linked to social well-being, describes communities that demonstrate norms of participation, equality and social trust; places where one looks out for one another and expects to both give and receive help and support when needed. Another aspect is social support that describes the number and quality of relationships between people in families and communities (Buchanan & Hudson 2000: 31). These two aspects are used to clarify well-being with regard to health and disease. For the purpose of this research, the learner's family and the schooling community are seen as major role players which may detract from or enhance his/her personal well-being.

Literature identifies individuals' self-judgement as their viewpoint of their personal well-being. The term well-being is used to describe an overall, subjective state which is present when a range of feelings, among them, energy, confidence, openness, enjoyment, happiness, calm and caring, are combined and balanced (Buchanan & Hudson 2000:31). Elster and Roemer (1991) refer to early 'utilitarians' whose focus of mental states and well-being is equated with pleasure, happiness or more generally, satisfaction. Some subsequent 'utilitarians' identify well-being with desire for fulfilment (Elster & Roemer 1991: 299). Andrews and Robinson (1991) in Buchanan and Hudson (2000) noted that life satisfaction is related to personal calculations about

how well things are going in different domains of life. There is considerable agreement between Buchanan and Hudson (2000), Schmuck and Sheldon (2001) and Elster and Roemer (1991) about measurement and balance of well-being as fulfilment or being whole in all aspects, in other words, mentally and emotionally as evinced by the person's behaviour.

With reference to above literature, educators who plan a learning activity need to be aware of the context of learners in order to implement an appropriate pedagogic intervention. Since well-being is influenced by happenings in different domains of a child's life, interventions to promote his or her well-being should take place in different domains in the child's life (home, school, community) or in multi-domains (Buchanan & Hudson 2000: 235).

Table 2.1 clarifies and classifies concepts that might be used to define well-being. Three classification groups are identified:
- Objective well-being
- Subjective well-being
- Mixed conceptions

Table 2.1: Classification of well-being concepts/essences/aspects

	Objective well-being	Subjective well-being	Mixed conceptions
• **Individual Well-being** • **Aspect**	• Personal qualities, wisdom, stability, hardiness, creativeness, morality	• Self appraisals • Self-esteem • Life-satisfaction	• Ego strength, identity, (mental) health
• **Overall**	• Need gratification, self-actualisation		
• **Collective aspect**	• Societal qualities, coherence, justice, equal chances, stability	• Social (opinion) climate acceptance, mutual trust	• Social integration • Viability
• **Overall**	• Viability	• Group morale	
• **Mixed conceptions** • **Aspects**	• Economic prosperity • Safety, freedom, equality	• Emancipation • Alienation	• Well-being in broadest sense
• **Overall**	• Welfare, progress		

Source: Strack, Argyle & Schwarz (1991: 9)

The table illustrates strong points of attained well-being. At the individual level of well-being, personal qualities and self-appraisals are highlighted and classified as objective and subjective well-being.

Some of the objective well-being concepts unpack personal qualities such as wisdom and stability as aspects of well-being. At the collective level, coherence and justice feature, while some mixed conceptions of well-being are reflected by economic prosperity and freedom, to name a few examples.

Subjective well-being reflects on self-evaluation by means self-appraisal that leads to personal life satisfaction; the collective aspect is reflected for example by mutual trust and group morale, whereas the mixed conception is reflected by emancipation and alienation.

Mixed conceptions reflect some of the following concepts: ego strength, identity, mental health, social integration and well-being in the broadest sense. The concepts identified by Strack et al (1991: 9) can be ideally used to assess a sense of well-being in individual FET learners. The view points to the ideal objective well-being, the self-reported well-being as seen by self and lastly generalised view in the mixed conceptions.

For the purpose of this research, the concept of well-being is defined as follows:

A sense of contentment, made up of a balance between feeling and logical thinking. In this state what is felt is satisfying and the thought content is realistic and well-thought out. Personal well-being acted out behaviourally reflects positive self-image, principled, high-level morale and self-reliance. Positive thoughts yield positive words and positive action that is, balanced personal well-being. Sense of personal well-being exudes warmth, care, enthusiasm and zealousness.

The concept of personal well-being is central to the thought about the aims of learning and teaching. In bringing up children, the skill, attitudes and kinds of knowledge, which we are transmitting to them, are intended, to help them to lead flourishing, fulfilling

lives (White 1995: 3). Personal well-being can be seen in terms of the subjects'
activities and experiences alone (White1995: 5).

Brodsky (1988: 25) highlights the positive functioning of the whole physical person. He
regards the state of positive functioning as a high-level well-being. The link is forged
between well-being and adjustment. Brodsky (1988: 25) says that to link well-being to
adjustment is the process of dealing with the demands of our bodies, our emotions and
our environments; it can be defined as normality, internal harmony, social competence,
mastery of changing demands and self-fulfilment.

Brodsky (1988: 10) identifies four characteristics of well-being:

- It is subjective and emotional.
  It is what the individual feels and thinks about him/herself. No right or wrong
  absolutes are present, because the imposition of right or wrong judgements is part
  of adjustment to society.

- It is a state.
  It is temporary in nature and not a continuous part of who we are. Psychologically
  healthy and hardy people may have more frequent instance of well-being than other
  people, but, as with all of us, this state comes and goes (Brodsky 1988: 10).

- It is the product of personal strivings.
  Personal strivings are the goals or purposes that individuals characteristically seek
  to reach through their everyday behaviours. The three components of well-being,
  namely positive affect, negative affect, and life satisfaction are significantly related
  to perceptions of accomplishment of personal strivings (Brodsky 1988: 11).

- It is more than the absence of negative affect and personal conflicts.
  While greater relief and satisfaction can be felt from simple escape from personal
  conflict, this state falls short of well-being. A well-being experience comes from
  moving toward desired life goals and toward desired ways of being (Brodsky 1988:
  12).

Well-being thus encompasses the deliberate movement toward, as well as achievement of, positive emotional states. The right side of the mental 'seesaw' is heaviest in well-being but since it is a state, it is predicted that it will go up and down at times (Brodsky 1988: 12).

The conclusion which I draw is that personal well-being is a state that can be attained and maintained. The starting point is based on what an individual aspires to achieve. In one's aspiration, an action plan to reach the set aims is developed. Certain resources are essential to realise this action plan and they are obtained during the learning process. These resources include skills and knowledge.

2.2.1 Subjective well-being

The term subjective well-being refers to people's evaluation of their lives. This evaluation can be cognitive such as judgements of life satisfaction or domain satisfaction, or affective such as feelings of elation or lack of depression. People are said to have high subjective well-being if they feel satisfied with the conditions of their lives and experience frequent positive emotions (Molfese & Molfese 2000: 212). Linked to this thought, Alsaker and Flammer (1999: 117) cite cognitive appraisal as an evaluation by a person of events with regard to their significance for their well-being.

Although objective factors such as income and health are important determinants of quality of life, subjective well-being refers to the subjective evaluations of one's life that can vary widely, even among lives that are seemingly similar. Consistent with this definition, subjective well-being measures are often self-reported measures that tap positive thoughts and emotions. More specifically, measuring three specific components often assesses subjective well-being. These components are judgements of cognitive life satisfaction; the experience of pleasant emotions; and the experience of negative emotions (Molfese & Molfese 2000: 212; Emmons 1999: 44).

2.2.1.1   Subjective well-being and its determinants

Current research defines subjective well-being as a complex variable including a positive self-esteem and a lack of dissatisfaction as well as happiness and satisfaction

with life and oneself (Alsaker & Flammer 1999: 116). A set of antecedents has been proposed that are relevant for subjective well-being. This set includes:

- Accomplishing normative and age specific developmental tasks

- Accomplishing non-normative developmental tasks and important life events

- Appropriate coping strategies in everyday situations

- Adequate social support (identified as an important aspect in relationships)

- The personal conviction that one is in control regarding important life domains

- Meaningful purposes in life and future perspectives

- A fit between personal aspirations and social and cultural context (Alsaker & Flammer 1999: 116).

In view of previous research and considerations made, the following indicators were identified as relevant for subjective well-being:

- Achieving self-chosen and authority-imposed goals

- Attaining socially defined values

- Being on the way to attain goals

- Adapting to one's (social) environment

- Satisfaction of everyday needs

- Successful handling of divergent goals

- Participating in interesting activities

- Positive evaluation of daily events

- Meaningful use of time

- Good health

- Accepting oneself (Alsaker & Flammer 1999: 117)

I am of the opinion that the antecedents and indicators of subjective well-being are most relevant to learners in the FET (grades 10-12) who are in need of an enhanced personal well-being. The key to an enhanced personal well-being involves setting own goals, fulfilment of basic needs and, most important, self-awareness and self-acceptance.

2.2.1.2 Model of well-being

With regard to the antecedents of well-being, two levels of components are distinguished. These are the background level and the agentic level with the latter mediating the effects of the former on subjective well-being. The background level comprises variables that are given to an individual independently of his or her actions and decisions, such as gender, age, cultural context, and objective life strains. Variables listed are given attributes that one may not have power to change but which one must accept and adapt to them. The agentic level includes variables that directly depend on the individual's agency (actions, experiences, and choices), such as sense of control and control experiences, and effective problem or emotion-oriented coping behaviour (Alsaker & Flammer 1999: 117). This level relates to an individual's strength to face challenges and the expertise to meet them, drawing courage from the same strength.

Reference is made to the antecedents of subjective well-being that are directly related to a personal sense of control and the ability to cope with situations. Researchers of subjective well-being believe that when people consider how they can manage the challenges with which they are confronted, they might refer, in the first place, to skills and to control expectancies. These researchers came to the assumption that a person who feels in control and has appropriate coping strategies generally feels better than a person who does not have a positive sense of control and self-efficacy expectancies and lacks appropriate coping strategies (Alsaker & Flammer 1999: 118).

The model depicted in Figure 2.1 taps into some developmental tasks of adolescent learners who need to assess their needs at a cognitive level when faced with difficulties. Self-awareness and self-knowledge are imperative with reference to effects of personality factors on subjective well-being. Social support will be dealt with at social well-being level (see section 2.4).
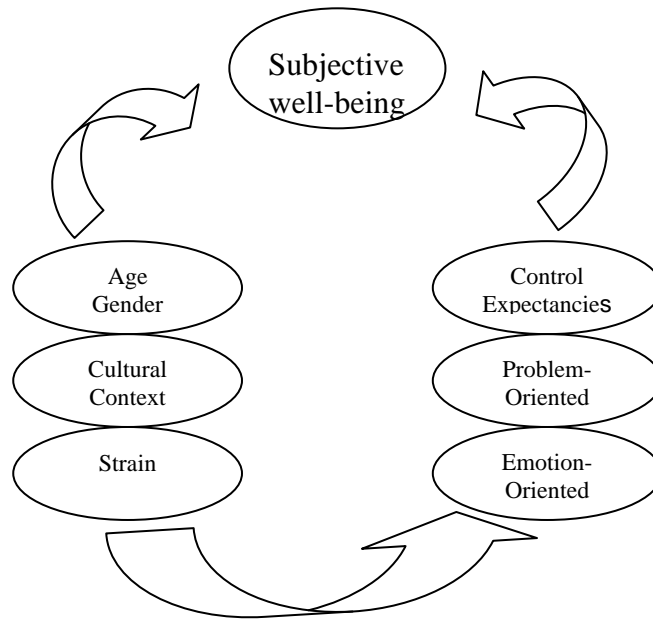
Figure 2.1: Subjective well-being model

Source: Alsaker & Flammer (1999: 117)

From the model the reader can see that two sets of cells circulate to make an input into the subjective well-being indicated at the top of the figure. One set represents the background factors and the other set shows agentic factors. The background factors dictate how one as an individual is affected. The agentic component uses the expertise gained by one's experiences and meaning attributed to have measures in place to deal with provoking factors in life. Moreover, age/gender may also influence how a person acts when faced with challenges.

The section above dealt with subjective well-being. The next section focuses on the psychological aspect of well-being as it is not possible to cover the totality of aspects that impact on well-being such as physical health, financial status, to mention just a few.

2.2 PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

The counsellor, who wishes to promote psychological well-being, needs to assess the position of the client on the wellness continuum to identify possible strengths. In this section, reference is made to future (idealistic/envisaged) models of mental health that

focus on competence and strength. Promoting the understanding of psychological strengths may advance new directions for capacity building, prevention and enhancement of the quality of life (Van Niekerk & Prins 2001: 40).

Two concepts are highlighted namely sense of coherence and generalised resistance resources which include material resources, shelter, food, coping strategies, adequate support systems, a sense of identity, a healthy lifestyle, spirituality and so forth (Van Niekerk & Prins 2001: 40). Thus, educators should assume the role of counsellors when 'educating' learners in need of personal well-being in a Guidance/Life Orientation learning area. According to Autonovsky in Van Niekerk and Prins (2001), a sense of coherence is a global orientation that allows the individual to experience the world as predictable and explicable. A sense of coherence furthermore implies aspects such as comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness. Comprehensibility refers to the extent to which people perceive life events as understandable, logical and predictable.

Closely linked to comprehensibility, manageability suggests the extent to which people perceive life resources at their disposal. Life resources represent generalised resistance resources and should adequately meet the demands made on them while meaningfulness denotes an individual's investment and commitment to life's projects, for example, love, work and play. A powerful sense of coherence within a crisis or under conditions of stress will lead to the mobilisation of generalised resistance resources which promote effective coping and resolve tension (Van Niekerk & Prins 2001: 40).

Wishing and Van Eeden in Van Niekerk and Prins (2001) reported on the well-being factor. Their study highlights aspects such as:
- Affect, in which positive feelings dominate over negative feelings
- Cognition, in which life is viewed as comprehensible and meaningful
- Behaviour that suggests personal agency (interest in work activities and an acceptance of challenges without the avoidance of problems)

A person's position on the dimension of psychological well-being is the result of the individual who is high in psychological well-being to the degree in which positive

affect predominates over negative (Bradburn 1969: 9). Related aspects identified by these authors include a positive self-image and sound interpersonal relationships (Van Niekerk & Prins 2001: 40).

The researcher identifies a link or equation between these behavioural aspects and the agentic level referred to in the subjective well-being. Therefore I believe that subjective well-being is the core and the immediate protective layer is psychological well-being as it is shown in Figure 2.2. The last two outer layers are more conversant with the outside world. They can support and shield the innermost beings that are the subjective well-being and the personal well-being.
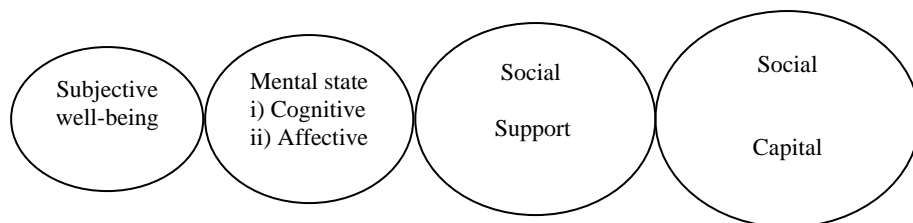
Figure 2.2: Protective layers of personal well-being

Cowan in Van Niekerk and Prins (2001: 40), regards psychological well-being as wellness of the innermost being. He warns educators and parents of three barriers that may hinder psychological well-being from flourishing. These are linked to:

- A child's early experiences do not nourish development
- A child fails to acquire basic skills, competencies and self-views that mediate wellness
- Key social settings such as family and school fail to advance wellness (Van Niekerk & Prins 2001: 40).

I feel that in order to reach wellness, learners need a strong protective layer of psychological well-being. This may be achieved throughout learners' developmental stages providing they are nourished with life skills, emerging competencies, an abundance of social support and emotional capital. These aspects lead to an enriched wellness. This point is elaborated in Figure 2.3.

Next sub-section explains the theoretical essence of psychological well-being based on various theorists' work.

2.3.1   A theory-driven perspective on psychological well-being

The theory-driven perspective on psychological well-being is aimed at the conceptualisation of well-being in a theoretical and all-encompassing manner. A wide range of meanings is uncovered, which covers the positive and negative, as well as psychological and social aspects of learners' functioning. Various domains are used to examine psychological functioning that lead to exemplars of health and well-being. Theorists from personality and clinical psychology (Willis & Reid 1999: 163) are referred to such as:

- Maslow's conception of self-actualisation
- Roger's description of the fully functioning person
- Jung's formulation of individuation
- Allport's depiction of maturity

There is reference to Aristotle who led a life that is characterised as full and healthy. His life entailed recognising and working to realize inner talents and potential. In addition, the following theorists (Willis & Reid 1999: 163) influence the theory of personal well-being:

- Erikson's psychosocial stages and tasks
- Buhler's basic life tendencies, moving toward life fulfilment
- Neugarten's depiction of personality changes in adulthood and old age

For the sake of this research it is necessary to touch on the concepts referred to above. For instance, learners need to be fully functional to reach self-actualisation. This occurs by working properly, by individuation and realising their unique identities to reach maturity. To fully reach the status of fulfilment and personal well-being, developmental tasks like those set out in the psychosocial theories need to be accomplished.

In the following paragraphs, I reflect on some definitions of theory-driven dimensions of well-being. These include the views of Jahoda, Maslow, Allport and Erikson

discussed by Willis and Reid (1999: 164). They state that self-acceptance is a ubiquitous criterion of wellness. Healthy people hold positive attitudes toward themselves. In addition to being the embodiment of mental health (Jahoda), accepting oneself which characterises the thoughts and actions of self-actualizers (Maslow), optimally functioning people (Rogers) and the mature person (Allport) are important. Throughout life, positive regard for oneself is integral to adapting to life challenges and enabling oneself to accomplish goals (Erikson) (Willis & Reid 1999: 164). Self-acceptance, positive regard for self and accepting oneself inform thoughts and actions of high level personal well-being that impacts on adaptation to life challenges as well as accomplished goals.

A positive relationship with others is the interpersonal counterpart to self-acceptance. Positive regard for others, as well as oneself, earmarks the healthy individual. Developing and maintaining warm trusting interpersonal relationships pervades depictions of positive functioning. The ability to love (Jahoda), to feel empathy and affection for all human beings (Maslow) and to develop warm relations with others (Rogers, Erikson) characterises a healthy individual. Others note the challenge to feel and act on a sense of responsibility to others (Erikson). In all, interpersonal warmth delineates a happy and healthy person (Willis & Reid 1999: 164).

Central to positive relationships is radiance of positive regard for self to others. Emotional well-being shown comprises the affect factors like love, empathy, affection and warmth. Autonomy is the counterpart to submissiveness and blind obedience to other people and society. Healthy people are capable of, and comfortable with, making decisions independently and regulating their behaviour from internal standards. This leads to environmental mastery where people engage and shape their milieus to reflect their needs and their personality. That is, healthy people can choose or create environments compatible with their physical and psychological needs. Autonomy and mastery imply that one is cognisant of personal standards and needs (Willis & Reid 1999: 164). I believe that autonomy is reflected in the person with a high sense of well-being. The person makes independent decisions and feels more than satisfied with them. Self-governance and environmental mastery are tied together when an individual designs, explores and controls his other environment to meet personal needs that affect personal well-being. Willis and Reid (1999: 165) paraphrase an old religious

supplication that states a healthy person has the courage to change what can and should be changed, the serenity to accept what cannot be changed, and the wisdom to know the difference.

Theoretically, self-actualising (Maslow), optimally functioning (Rogers) and individuated (Jung) people gain approval from internal standards rather than from other people and society. Throughout life, people experience a burgeoning sense of psychological freedom, turning inward and reflecting on themselves, their lives, and what they live for each day (Erikson, Jung, and Neugarten). I assume that internal standards equivalent to conscience or values are essential towards a sense of personal well-being referred to in personal autonomy. To identify these standards one goes through personal evaluation/reflection or makes introspection.

Beside internal reflection, healthy and mature (Allport) people participate in important social activities, thereby engaging their surroundings. Moreover, during midlife, people orchestrate (co-ordinate deliberately) their complex environments (Buhler, Neugarten) and shape society by nurturing youth and youth adults (Erikson) (Willis & Reid 1999: 164). Having a purpose in life incorporates the criterion that healthy people possess goals, intentions, and a sense of direction, and they feel that their lives are meaningful. Mature people (Allport) feel a purpose to their lives, and they believe they can live out their plan.

Lifespan theories (Buhler, Erikson, Jung) depict the stages and trajectories of life as goals or tasks such as industriousness (youth), intimacy (young adulthood), socially active (middle adulthood), and psychologically integrated (later adulthood) (Willis & Reid 1999:164). From my reflection of theorists referred to I have realised that personal growth leads to attainment of personal goals that express purpose in life. A sense of personal well-being needs a readily available person with a positive approach to any challenge and who also is motivated to reach set goals.

Personal growth, the final criterion of psychological well-being, entails feelings of, and striving toward, exploration and development. The desire and attempt to grow characterises self-actualisers (Maslow). Openness to new experiences and opportunities, a predecessor to growth, exemplifies the fully functioning person

(Rogers). A central feature in the life-span theories (Buhler, Erikson, Jung, and Neurgaten) is the individual's drive to grow, building on past achievements and milestones. Willis and Reid (1999:165) conclude that these theories discussed above point to the multi-faceted nature of psychological well-being.
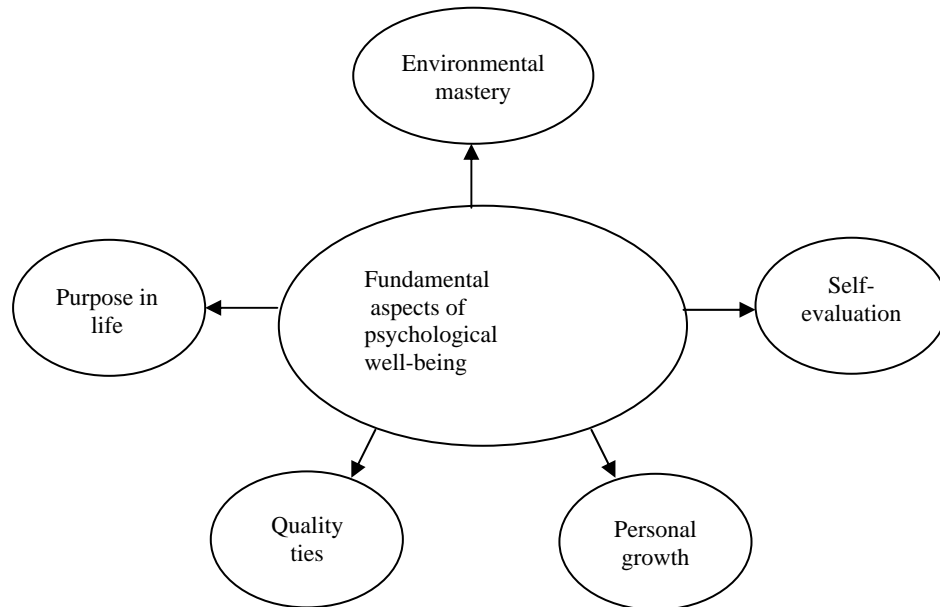
Figure 2.3: Fundamental aspects of psychological well-being

I have established from the literature that psychological well-being starts from the self, allows for self-identity and culminates in self-actualisation. The route followed sets out tasks that are linked to stages in a person's life. Personal well-being is equal to a healthy persona that reflects a functioning being. Figure 2.3 indicates the important aspects that make-up personal well-being as seen in the psychological well-being arena. These different facets of psychological well-being form the first protective layer of subjective well-being in Figure 2.2.

2.3.2   The importance of commitment

Berzonsky (2003: 132) illustrates the role that identity processing styles and identity commitment may play in personal well-being. Speculations are advanced regarding different types of identity commitments and the functions they may serve in enhancing well-being and everyday functioning. Berzonsky's research focuses on social-cognitive processes that individuals classified within different status categories rely on when they process self-relevant information, negotiate identity issues and make personal

decisions. Three identity processing orientations or styles have been identified: diffuse-avoidant, informational and normative. Individuals categorised as being in the diffusion identity status have been found to utilise what is called a diffuse-avoidant identity processing style. They strategically try to avoid dealing with personal problems, conflicts, and decisions. If one procrastinates and delays long enough, situational demands, incentives, and consequences tend to dictate and constrain behavioural reactions. This identity processing style places personal well-being on the negative pole of the continuum. A diffuse-avoidant identity style has been found to be positively associated with emotionally focused coping strategies, external control expectancies, and self-handicapping, maladaptive decisional strategies and depressive reactions. The style tends to be negatively correlated with self-awareness, cognitive persistence, conscientiousness and measures of well-being (Berzonsky 2003: 132).

Individuals categorized as having achieved an identity, use the informational style. They deal with identity issues in a relatively deliberate and mentally effortful manner, intentionally seeking out, evaluating and relying on self-relevant information. They take a sceptical stance toward their own self-views and they willingly suspend judgement and re-evaluate aspects of their self-constructions when faced with discrepant feedback. Use of an informational identity style has been found to be positively associated with need for cognition, cognitive complexity, self-reflection, problem-focused coping, vigilant decision-making, subjective well-being, openness and conscientiousness (Berzonsky 2003: 132). The informational style tends to position the person concerned on the positive effect of the wellness continuum hence the person experiences an enhanced sense of personal well-being. The use of this style encourages the use of the intellect, allows foresight and generates proactive behaviour. This style highlights a broad frame of reference.

Foreclosed individuals have been found to use a normative processing style. They deal with identity issues in a relatively automatic fashion by internalising the values and beliefs of significant others with little deliberate self-evaluation. Research indicates that normative-oriented individuals are conscientious and agreeable, have a clear sense of direction and a positive well-being, but they have limited tolerance for a high degree of structure, and they are closed to information that may threaten their personal belief and value systems (Berzonsky 2003: 132).

However, a person ends up choosing between one of the above three identity processing orientations. This is discussed in the next section.

2.3.2.1 Identity commitment

Brickman; Campell; Meeus, Iedema, Helsen, and Vollenbergh; Pelham and Swann in Berzonsky (2003) indicate that stable personal commitments or self-certainty may play an important role in promoting personal functioning and well-being. Commitment provides people with a sense of purpose and direction, and it can serve as the frame of reference within which behaviour and feedback are monitored, evaluated and regulated. Research indicates that the strength of commitment is positively related to vigilant decision-making and problem-focused coping and negatively associated with procrastination, rationalisation, other directedness, and the tendency to experience pre-decisional panic and public self-consciousness (Berzonsky 2003: 133).

The application of an informational style brings the personal commitment to the fore that identifies the person's state of being. Well-articulated commitments will be owned and identified with by the one who is pledged to them. This leads me to say that a person will take ownership of his/her identity processing style and will feel strongly about his/her personal well-being. The information based on identity styles and identity commitment assists in understanding ways that are effective towards an enhanced personal well-being. I discuss personal goals in the next section.

2.3.2.2 Personal goals

The literature studied tends to suggest that considerable progress has been made in understanding how goals contribute to long-term levels of well-being (Keyes & Haidt 2003: 105). Goals have been identified as key integrative and analytic units in the study of human motivation. The driving concern has been to understand how personal goals are related to long-term levels of happiness and life satisfaction and how ultimately to use this knowledge in a way that might optimise human well-being. Some of the questions arising from goal setting are:

- How do goals contribute to living the positive life?

- Of all of the goals that people strive for, which really matter?

- Which goals most provide a sense of meaning and purpose?

Keyes and Haidt (2003) are of the opinion that goal attainment is a major benchmark for the experience of well-being. When asked what makes for a happy, fulfilling, and meaningful life, people spontaneously discuss their life goals, wishes and dreams for the future. For many people, the primary goal in life is to be happy. Yet research indicates that happiness is most often a by-product of participating in worthwhile projects and activities that do not have as their primary focus the attainment of happiness. Whether they focus primarily on basic research or intervention, psychologists also see goal-striving as vital to 'the good life'. Psychological well-being has been defined as "the self-evaluated level of the person's competence and the self, weighted in terms of the person's hierarchy of goals" (Keyes & Haidt 2003: 105).

Frisch in Keyes and Haidt (2003) defines happiness as "the extent to which important goals, needs, and wishes have been fulfilled". Literature reviewed connects the 'good life' and 'happiness' to personal goals fully reached. Personal pathways to well-being are through goals that the individual sets (Keyes & Haidt 2003: 105). It seems as if personal well-being is attained by setting goals that are packaged with a sense of urgency to reach them. Once the set goals are attained, the outcome that is then reached emerges as full satisfaction that registers in the individual as a sense of personal well-being.

In the next section, I look at humanistic psychology for an understanding of the meaning that goal setting can create in an individual's life en route to self-actualisation and personal well-being.

2.3.3 Well-being defined in humanistic psychology

Defining well-being in this school of thought is not complicated. This school of psychology values subjectivity, it is concerned with the meaning of life, assumes that people strive to fulfil and actualise themselves, and utilises the unique human traits of will, responsibility and spirituality. Therefore four elements of well-being are identified within this school of thought:

i. Natural growth: To attain well-being people must be 'unblocked'. This opens the ability to improve oneself and to move toward fulfilment of potential ways of feelings and being.

ii. Honesty and spontaneity: People are honest with themselves and others. They act responsibly but freely. Their actions are consistent with their feelings and thoughts.

iii. Unconditional caring: In well-being, people love others for who they truly are. People accept and care for each other genuinely and without ulterior motives. Others are appreciated for who they are becoming and how they are developing.

iv. Actualised experiences: People experience moments of deep serenity and fulfilment. At times, ordinary life is transcended, and they move toward spiritual or enlightened existence (Brodsky 1988: 58).

In conclusion of this section, I state that the humanistic psychology's view of personal well-being fits well with the dimensions that are highlighted by the theories that I presented. Concepts like self-acceptance, positive regard, love and self-actualisation come to the fore as captured in section 2.3. The humanistic notion of personal well-being ties in perfectly with the fundamental aspects of psychological well-being. Important links that are forged are the following: unconditional caring and quality ties, purpose in life goes with actualised experiences in addition to identity commitment to set goals. In the next section, a closely linked facet is discussed, namely the social well-being of a person and its relationship to personal well-being.

2.4   SOCIAL WELL-BEING

A learner on his/her way to personal well-being cannot be studied in isolation or be removed from his/her social context hence reference is made to society, local community and family context. MacIntyre; Raz; Taylor; Nussbaum and others in White (1995) have converged in different ways on the view that personal well-being is to be understood against a larger, social, framework. Fulfilment lies not only in achieving more determinate goals, but also in more global commitments to the various social groups to which we belong (White1995: 5). The learners' socio-political context needs exploration. Factors attributed to this context which have the potential to influence psychological (personal) well-being are transformation, crime, violence and rape, AIDS

and homelessness, racial discrimination, political violence and poverty (Van Niekerk & Prins 2001: 11).

The bio-psychosocial approach is advocated by Kruger and Adams (1998). Personal well-being requires an all embracing approach, meaning that the person as a whole needs to be considered. The bio-psychosocial approach considers the interlinked aspects that need to be addressed in order to fully reach personal well-being. The biological aspects are those that relate to learners' physical well-being and sexual development. The psychological aspects relate to the learners' cognitions and emotions, while the social aspects relate to learners' relationships with others (Kruger & Adams 1998: 264). These aspects are interlinked so that, for example, when learners are working with or relating to other people the cognitive-social component is activated; when they are in close relationships the sexual-emotional component comes to the fore and when they think about how their physical body compares to others, the bio-social aspect is of the essence (Kruger & Adams 1998: 265).

Buchanan and Hudson (2000: 31) give a definition of social well-being, which covers all these approaches. Social well-being "is relationships between people which enhance rather than damage, the well-being of individuals". To enhance social well-being, emotional literacy is suggested which enables the development of emotional intelligence. This is a key skill in the development of interpersonal relationships, in the maintenance of health and in the creation of effective workplaces and schools (Buchanan & Hudson 2000: 31).

Haworth (1997) makes reference to Jahoda who also reflects on social well-being. Jahoda refers to five categories of psychological experience, which are vital for well-being. If people are deprived of these experiences their well-being declines. These experiences are time structure, social contact, collective effort or purpose, social identity/status and regular activity (Haworth 1997: 24). The experience of time is shaped by public institutions, with the school system structuring the day of a learner. Social contacts are possible in public institutions like schools. Such contacts are actually enforced, and whether the learners like the social contacts or not, they are seen as an inescapable source for enlarging a person's social horizon (Haworth 1997: 25). Learners demonstrate collective effort or purpose in learning activities. Collective effort

through teamwork addresses critical outcome number four in the LO curriculum, namely "working effectively with others in a group" (Vergnani & Frank 1998: v). For the learners to reach personal well-being as an outcome, it is essential for them to participate in cooperative learning or group learning activities. I feel it is necessary for learners to share responsibilities, which in labour terms are referred to as division of labour.

The social ecological model that is presented in the next section, transposes the theories of social well-being to an applicable model of well-being.

2.4.1 A social-ecological model of well-being

Personality researchers have explored diverse aspects of person-environment interaction and their impact on human well-being. Their research led to the development of a social-ecological perspective displayed in Figure 2.4.
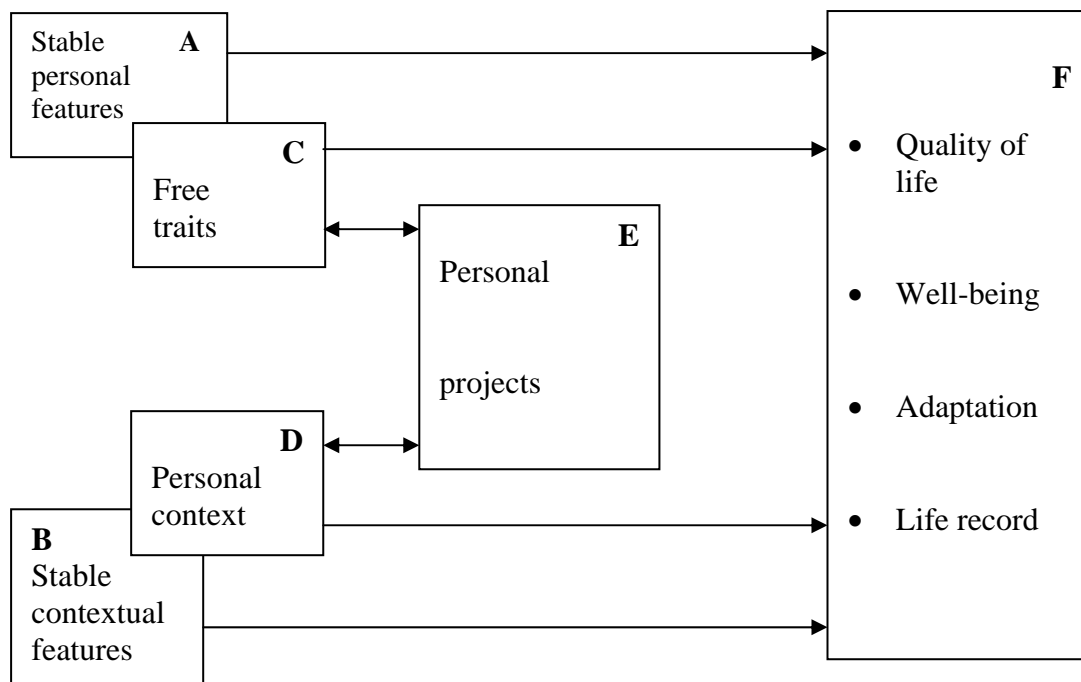
Figure 2.4: A social-ecological framework for the study of person-interaction
Source: Walsh et al (2000: 89)

There is considerable evidence for the direct effect of relatively fixed features of individuals (see A above) on their well-being. For example, well-being is influenced directly by extraversion (positively) and neuroticism (negatively), in part, because these stable traits are strongly associated with the experience of positive and negative affect. The operation of indirect paths (see C above) is exemplified by the finding that extraverts characteristically seek out situations that are stimulating and congruent with their needs, and lead to an enhanced well-being (Walsh, Craik & Price 2000: 90). The direct effect of environmental or contextual variables (see B and D above) on well-being is also well established. The general stressfulness of environmental influence, in particular, has been shown to influence levels of well-being and exact psychological costs, even in the face of apparent physiological adaptation. The unit of analysis developed and used in the study of the socio-ecological model of well-being is termed personal projects (see E above).

Personal projects are extended sets of personally salient actions that are influenced both by personal and contextual variables in dynamic interaction. Personal projects can range from banal routines to ventures of surpassing importance. They may be solitary or communal, onerous or easy. Projects may be forsaken or obsessed over. They may be the very essence of a flourishing life or the sign that things are going tragically awry (Walsh et al 2000: 90). Personal projects are conceived as carrier units for person-environment transactions, because it is through them those personality propensities and environmental affordances are brought in direct contact. Person-environment interaction is possible through personal projects and a person needs to find a suitable inclination to embark on the project considering what the environment offers. The fulfilment of a personal project placed in the person-environment transaction will be determined by the personal agency of the one involved. Personal projects facilitate two aspirations of a social-ecological perspective; they provide both a method for exploring the roots of human well-being and offer possible routes for its enhancement (Walsh et al 2000: 92).

It is apparent that figure 2.4 alludes to what I call 'ABCDE' aspects showing a person-in-interaction in his/her environment. The 'A-D' aspects lead to the final product seen in personal projects. The 'A-D' aspects which feature a person in a stable context merge into 'F-factors' being quality life, well-being, adaptation and life record.

Personal projects will ferry through the first four indispensable features to the final F-factor. To lead a quality life the person-environment interaction has to be evolving hierarchically starting from basic family unit to the broader society. Person-environment interaction plays a role in affording the opportunity to actualise and accomplish self in the well-known environment adapted to.

The above discussion focussed mainly on well-being as a multi-dimensional concept. However, the ecological and hierarchical structure of well-being also needs to be considered.

2.4.2   Ecological and hierarchical structure of well-being

Well-being is not only a multidimensional concept, but also a hierarchical one. The well-being of the individual is predicated on the well-being of the immediate family, which, in turn, is directly influenced by community and societal conditions. Prilleltensky and Nelson (2002: 10) refer to Cowen who observed, "Optimal development of wellness … requires integrated sets of operations involving individuals, families, settings, community contexts, and macro-level societal structures and policies". In apparent disregard for this knowledge, the main focus is on counselling, therapy, or person-centred prevention as the main avenues for well-being. Much attention needs to be paid to socio-economic determinants of health that exercise a powerful impact on personal well-being (Prilleltensky & Nelson 2002: 10). They further say that definitions of well-being based exclusively on intrapsychic factors cannot be wholly accepted (Prilleltensky & Nelson 2002: 11). The said definitions tend to be psycho-centric because they concentrate on the cognitive and emotional sources and consequences of suffering and well-being, to the exclusion of the social, material, and political roots and effects of lack of power. Prilleltensky and Nelson (2002) spell out the requirement for 'well-enough' social and political conditions, free of economic exploitation and human rights abuses, to experience quality of life. Interpersonal exchanges based on respect and mutual support are expected to add to quality life.

Prilleltensky and Nelson (2002: 11) also refer to Eckersley (2000) who shows that subjective experiences of well-being are heavily dictated by cultural trends such as individualism and consumerism. The trends that are mentioned are determined by

ecological-hierarchy in the society and in such a manner, links are forged between the psychological experiences of poverty and political structures of oppression. Amongst other factors, access to preventive health care and educational opportunities is not only a means to human development and personal well-being, but also an end. Thus, well-being at the collective level, is not only measured by the health and educational outcomes of a group of individuals, but also by the presence of enabling institutions and societal infrastructures. According to this view, they define well-being in broad terms that encompass social progress and human development. The writers above conclude that psychological well-being includes interpersonal and political well-being (Prilleltensky & Nelson 2002: 11).

As an Education Department official, I feel that schools are learning sites that should be enabling institutions of the views expressed by Walsh (2000), and Prilleltensky and Nelson (2002). These sites and community health centres need to be accessible to all and to offer support and intervention to all in order to achieve personal well-being. Prilleltensky and Nelson reflected on Sen who articulates the complementarity of diverse social structures in fostering what they call well-being and what he calls human development. This study ascertains the needs of FET learners for personal well-being. It is possible that various social community structures need to work in collaborative partnership to enhance the well-being of learners.

Sen invokes the interaction of five types of freedoms in pursuit of human development:
  i.   Political freedoms
 ii.   Economic facilities
iii.   Social opportunities
 iv.   Transparency
  v.   Protective security
Embedded in freedoms are distinct types of rights and opportunities which help to advance the general capability of a person (Prilleltensky & Nelson 2002: 12).

I am of the opinion that the learner on his/her way towards well-being requires the above-mentioned freedoms. The education system in South Africa should provide these as enlisted in the Constitution. The Constitution itself provides the ecological structures necessary for personal well-being and to the corresponding open society: we have the

right to 'freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion'; we have the right to 'freedom of expression,' to 'freedom of the press,' to 'freedom of artistic creativity,' to 'academic freedom and freedom of scientific research,' to 'freedom of assembly,' and to 'freedom of association' (Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy 2001: 17). When collective factors such as social justice and access to valued resources combine with a sense of community and personal empowerment, the chances are that psychological and political well-being will ensue (Prilleltensky & Nelson 2002: 12).

The ecological structures implied in the South African Constitution need to be in place as realities in communities. Consistency and stability are essential for these structures to function as a base for achieving personal well-being.

2.5 THE ACHIEVEMENT OF WELL-BEING

Well-being is achieved by simultaneous and balanced satisfaction of personal, relational, and collective needs. The main values comprising the three domains of well-being and their respective needs are cited in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Personal, relational and collective domains of well-being

Well-being					
Domains	**Personal well-being**		**Relational well-being**		**Collective well-being**
Values	Self-determination and personal growth	Health	Respect for human diversity	Collaboration and democratic participation	Support for community structures	Social justice
Definition	Promotion of ability of children and adults to pursue chosen goals in life	Protection of physical and emotional health	Promotion of respect and appreciation for diverse social identities and for people's	Promotion of fair processes whereby children and adults can have meaningful input into decisions	Promotion of vital community structures that facilitate the pursuit of personal and	Promotion of fair and equitable allocation of bargaining powers, obligations, and

			ability to define themselves	affecting their lives	communal goals	resources in society
Needs addressed	Mastery, control, self-efficacy, choice, skills, growth and autonomy	Emotional and physical well-being	Identity, dignity, self-respect, self-esteem, acceptance	Participation, involvement, and mutual responsibility	Sense of community, cohesion, formal support	Economic security, shelter, clothing, nutrition, access to vital health and social services

Source: Prillentensky & Nelson (2002: 13)

Personal well-being is the starting point which radiates outward to relational well-being. Relational well-being is signified by people reaching out to each other. This cements the inner personal well-being. The collective movement towards personal well-being of each individual emerges in a set social structure.

2.6 SUMMARY

The term well-being is used to describe the complete, subjective state referring to a range of feelings that are experienced at present, that may be dormant or active in a person. This range of feelings reflects energy, confidence, openness, enjoyment in a combined and a balanced manner (Buchanan & Hudson 2000: 31). This personal well-being is described as good health, contentment and comfort.

The literature study gave the researcher an understanding that for one to reach personal well-being different aspects or domains need to be considered. All these aspects contribute to and culminate in personal well-being. The starting point might be the person's state of being at a specific time. Domains like psychological well-being involve emotions that influence the said state of being. This has either a positive or a negative effect on the person's state of being.

The person concerned cannot be removed from his/her immediate environment, hence the notion of social well-being. In addition, another domain introduced in the study is relational well-being. The achievement of this state depends on one's relationships with others, family, community and school. The structures mentioned in connection with the person might serve as strengthening resources to affirm personal well-being. It is essential for all the realms of the state of being to be integrated. This leads the person to personal well-being, a state of wellness, life satisfaction and fulfilment. After doing the literature review, I realised that at the centre of this balanced convergence is subjective well-being. The term refers broadly to a set of interrelated affective phenomena including specific, pleasurable emotional states such as happiness, contentment, satisfaction and love, as well as more generalised positive affect (Diener et al in Aspinwall & Staudinger 2003: 332).

Personal goals are highlighted in this study; it is essential to strive towards them. Valued personal goals are honoured and a productive identity style comes to the fore. Certain personal resources and psychological strengths, such as high socio-economic status, wisdom, and resilience, facilitate individuals' efforts to achieve higher levels of subjective and physiological well-being (Aspinwall & Staudinger 2003: 332). Individuals who have an advantage of resources and well-nurtured psychological resilience can maintain a high sense of personal well-being.

The following chapter investigates learners' needs to attain sense of personal well-being, as well as the developmental stage in which the majority of FET learners fall.

CHAPTER THREE

ADOLESCENTS' NEEDS PERTAINING TO THEIR WELL-BEING

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to discuss adolescents' needs regarding their personal well-being. This information should enable educators and parents to deal with adolescents more effectively. These needs are seen in the context and nature of adolescence as a developmental phase. I address the processes and needs of adolescents, and the interaction of their growth processes and contextual systems (Engelbrecht & Green 2001: 102). I refer to the balance between the adolescents reaching developmental milestones and the environmental deprivation which sets them back regarding their personal well-being. Contextual factors or systems refer to the fact that the adolescent learner is born and bred in a specific society, community and/or family that constitute his/her social well-being, as discussed in section 2.4.2.

Movies depicting teenagers and studies of troubled and rebellious teens describe adolescence as a time of turmoil and misery, conflict and hostility toward parents, reflected in a desire for separation. What is missing from this portrait of adolescence? This stereotype of adolescence does not depict the majority of teens who feel good about themselves and their communities, for example those who volunteer at AIDS centres and hold jobs to earn extra income (Wade & Tavris 1998: 522).

The above contradiction seems to be part of the problem regarding the adolescents' personal well-being. This chapter dwells on the adolescent mental health and pinpoints what is needed for their positive mental health and well-being. Furthermore, this information should enhance educators' knowledge regarding the needs that adolescents have to attain a sense of personal well-being.

3.2 ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Why does mental health and well-being of adolescents matter? To grasp the importance of adolescent health, it is crucial to understand this developmental period. Adolescence is typically defined as the beginning of puberty, in which a physiological transformation that gives boys and girls adult bodies occurs. This alters how they are perceived and treated by others, as well as how they view themselves (Call, Hein, Riedel, Mcloyd, Petersen & Kipke 2002: 72).

Adolescence is the time for teens to develop the personal strengths and social skills that promote effective functioning in the adult world. It is a period that involves great emotional swings, a focus on oneself, and increasingly active sexual aggressive drives. In an effort to cope with these changes, adolescents engage in a wide variety of activities. Some of these actions help adolescents to successfully adapt, whereas others result in negative outcomes. This is a period of 'trying out' new behaviours (Valfre 2001: 168). Adolescent mental health also includes the concept of well-being, which is the "presence of personal and interpersonal strengths that promote optimal functioning" (Kadzin in Valfre 2001: 168). Adolescence is a critical developmental period with long-term implications for mental health and well-being of the individual and for society as a whole. The most significant factors regarding adolescents' mental health are found in their environments and in the choices and opportunities for health-enhancing or health-compromising behaviours that these contexts present (Call et al 2002: 69).

In another study by Schulenberg et al in Crockett and Silbereisen (2000) adolescence is regarded as moving from high school into young adulthood. It is seen as a period of transition, a time of continuity and discontinuity in health and well-being. Their study concludes that it depends on how well one negotiates this transition, as evidenced by one's course of well-being (Crockett & Silbereisen 2000: 246). Adolescence marks the years during which relatively accepting and 'sweet' children become adults in their own rights. Following sexual maturation of puberty, adolescents typically reject the dependent contracts that they had with their parents. It is a period of much storm and strife, both in the inner life of the adolescents and in their relationships to their parents. Opposition, confrontation and argumentation are a natural part of the process as the

adolescent seeks to break away and find his/her own adulthood (Goud & Arkoff 1998: 288).

Diversity in life paths becomes more clearly manifested during this transition, and interindividual variability in the timing and content of developmental milestones increases. This greater diversity is due to the realisation of life path preferences established before the change as well as to the creation of new paths as a function of experiences at that time. The emergence of new roles and social contexts provides increased opportunities for successes and failures, which in turn may set the stage for potential discontinuity in functioning between adolescence and young adulthood (Crockett & Silbereisen 2000: 224). Adolescence is also a time for first experiences of various kinds. Adolescents are out of direct control of parents and guardians, live away from home, have their first sexual experiences, go through the transition from school to work and make the transition from the role of cared for to caregiver. They begin to explore new identities; they practise and begin to assume some of the roles and responsibilities of adulthood. In the process of taking these developmental steps toward independence, adolescents make decisions and develop habits with lifelong implications for their mental health and well-being. The patterns of behaviour begin in adolescence, both enhancing and compromising behaviours, and often carry through to adulthood (Call et al 2002: 72).

Many mental health-related behaviours are initiated, experimented, explored, and learned during adolescence. It is said that past behaviour serves as a determinant of future behaviour. In other words, behaviour that is familiar is likely to be repeated. Habits or tastes, which are consolidated during adolescence, will affect adult mental health (Spruijt-Mezt 1999: 16).

The environments that adolescents experience are critical. The daily contexts of their lives are vital influences that can hinder or foster the development of mental health and well-being. As adolescents spend less time in the family and more time in new contexts with peers, in the community, in a work setting, and in romantic or sexual relationships these contexts can maintain well-being, support resiliency or increase risk (Call et al 2002: 72). In the study "Understanding differences in affect and well-being", Watson

supports the popular notion that adolescence is a time of heightened stress and anxiety (Watson 2000: 206).

I have seen in my work context as member of the district office of the Education Department the process of the adolescents' transition to adulthood is not smooth. The problems that the adolescents experience might have a negative or positive effect on them, depending on how they handle the problems. The context in which they live seems to impact on their behaviour. The literature which I reviewed in an attempt to come to grips with adolescents' needs for personal well-being, mainly referred to mental health. The next section explains what is meant by mental health and links the concept to personal well-being.

3.2.1   A positive diagnosis of mental health in adolescence

In 1978 the World Health Organization proposed a view of 'health' as not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, but a positive state of physical, mental, social well-being. In this view, mental well-being is part of health and cannot be separated from it (Swartz 1998: 70). Mechanic (1999: 1) states that human feelings and behaviour are extremely variable. The same people may be happy or sad, energetic or lethargic, anxious or calm depending on their environment and personal lives at the time. Many emotions and reactions fall within the normal range because everyday events evoke varying responses from us (Mechanic 1999: 1). Mechanic feels that deviations from 'normal' mental health are recognised in two ways:

- Persons sometimes engage in behaviour that is strikingly discordant with their social circumstances and life situation; their behaviour or expressed feelings at such time is bizarre and difficult to interpret.
- Deviations from mental health are identified through recognition of personal suffering that is not justified by the circumstances of the individual's life.

Snyder and Lopez (2002: 48) agree with subjective well-being as it is explained in section 2.2 of this study, saying that subjective well-being reflects individuals' perceptions and evaluations of their own lives in terms of their affective states, psychological functioning, and social functioning. According to Snyder and Lopez

(2002) elements of subjective well-being fall into two clusters of symptoms that parallel the symptom clusters for major depression. The first cluster reflects measures of emotional vitality, and the second cluster consists of measures of positive functioning. In the same way that depression consists of depressed mood and malfunctioning, subjective well-being has been operationalised in terms of emotional well-being and positive functioning (Snyder & Lopez 2002: 48). Adolescent learners are in the position to evaluate and identify their state of well-being. If they define their state of well-being as positive, it concurs with emotional vitality.

Snyder and Lopez (2002: 48) define mental health as a complete state consisting of the absence of mental illness and the presence of high-level well-being. The model of complete mental health combines the mental illness and mental health dimensions thereby yielding two states of mental illness and two states of mental health. Complete mental health is the syndrome that combines high levels of symptoms of emotional, psychological, and social well-being, as well as the absence of recent mental illness. Incomplete mental health, on the other hand, is a condition in which individuals may be free of recent mental illness, but they also have low levels of emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Complete mental illness is the syndrome that combines low levels of symptoms of emotional, psychological and social well-being and includes the diagnosis of recent mental illness such as depression. In this study, the absence of depression in an adolescent would indicate that he/she has a positive measure of personal well-being.

Figure 3.1 indicates two poles:

1. Complete mental health that indicates high subjective well-being. This half includes symptoms like perfect mental health, low mental illness symptoms. It means every aspect of well-being is favourably high, hence the dominance over high aspects of mental illness. Aspects of well-being mentioned in chapter two like psychological, emotional, physical and social well-being come to the fore. These aspects contribute towards high subjective well-being.

2. Complete mental illnesses lead to low subjective well-being. This state of being is signified by high mental illness and an incomplete mental health that cannot resist odd factors. Reference is made to the protective layers which were shown in Figure 2.2. This indicates that the innermost subjective well-being is very vulnerable; the protective layers of psychological and social well-being are very thin. The cracks

on this low imperfect subjective well-being can be exhibited in the physical state of the person such as psychosomatic symptoms which reflect low subjective well-being. The learner with a low measure of personal well-being will be disturbed in his/her attempt to focus on any activity, academic or psychosocial.

High subjective
well-being

Incomplete
mental
health

Complete mental
health

High mental
illness
symptoms

Low mental
illness
symptoms

Complete
mental illness

Incomplete
mental health

Low subjective
well-being symptoms
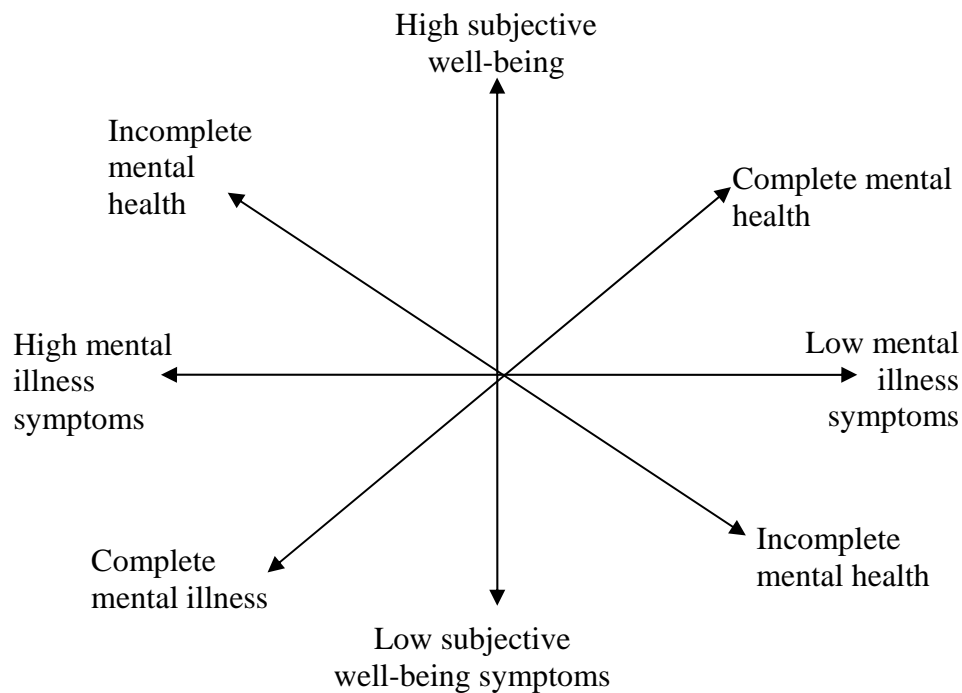
Figure 3.1: The complete state model of mental health and mental illness
Source: Snyder and Lopez (2002: 50)

Contributory factors to a personal sense of well-being equal to mental health were in discussed in section 2.3. Any deficits in adolescents' lives would impact on their approach to challenges of everyday life. The following gaps have been identified by Berzonsky (2003):

- Emotional discomfort and suffering is common. Lack of emotional commitment that reflects a non-rational but unwavering sense of subjective certainty (Berzonsky 2003: 139).

- Their psychological well-being is weakened they fail to understand their situation rationally. Berzonsky (2003: 139) refers to premature cognitive commitment that occurs mindlessly without critical processing and evaluation of information.

Inability to use life resources at their disposal to meet life demands as mentioned in section 2.3. A poor sense of coherence makes it impossible for them to resolve or cope with crisis.

- Inability to accept themselves, not autonomous and dependent. They cannot regulate behaviour by means of internal control. Most of them lack a sense of purpose and direction which negatively impacts on their personal well-being.

- Social well-being as defined in section 2.4, refers to personal relationships that need to 'enhance' personal well-being. Adolescent learners tend to withdraw from their relationship with parents, as their preference is being with their peers.

The following sections on mental health and common problems of adolescence clarify this deficiency in their personal well-being.

3.2.2 Common problems to mental health problems of adolescence

The world is large and complex. Even the most successful people are overwhelmed by the sheer amount of information and experiences that are currently available. Adolescents, who are just beginning to emerge from the security of childhood, must gain understanding and control of themselves and, at the same time, learn to cope with living within this uncertain world. Most of the common problems of adolescence fall into two categories, namely problems that arise from within oneself (internal sources), and those that are rooted outside the teen's personal sphere of control (external sources) (Valfre 2001: 166).

3.2.2.1 Internal problems

Internal problems are directly linked to developmental problems. Most difficulties of early adolescence arise from within the individual. Physical changes begin to take place. New sensations are experienced. Bodily changes seem abnormal at times, and floods of intense emotions bring on dramatic emotional ups and downs. An important developmental problem of adolescence is defining oneself, establishing an identity separate from one's family. According to Valfre (2001: 166), at this stage, teens need to look into themselves and to engage in introspection (the process of examining one's

own thoughts, emotions, reactions, attitudes, opinions, values, and behaviours by looking at the inner self). They consider who they are, how they see themselves, how they think others may see them, and how relationships with various people affect them. This process of looking inward helps them to define themselves, but it also brings about many changes in mood, attitude, and behaviour (Valfre 2001: 166-167).

Problems that threaten self-esteem or confidence routinely arise during the journey to adulthood. It is important for teens to feel secure and emotionally supported by adults during these confusing periods. Just knowing that someone accepts and cares goes a long way toward helping teens through troubled times (Valfre 2001: 167).

I am of the opinion that the problems outlined above point to the needs faced by the adolescent teen. They need to be informed about whatever changes they may experience so that they can attain the knowledge and skills to deal with various challenges in their life-path. Information can be gained through supportive-nurturing interaction with peers, parents, educators or psychologists and also community centre personnel.

3.2.2.2 External problems

External problems are linked to environmental issues. Such problems that arise outside the thoughts and feelings of the teen are called external problems. External problems fall into three basic areas: family, social and environmental. Family problems change as the adolescent develops independence. During early adolescence (11-14 years) teens experience the pull between wanting to stay dependent and moving toward independence. They begin to seek their freedom, but still require emotional ties provided by family structure (Valfre 2001: 167). By mid-adolescence (14-17 years) the push for independence is in full swing, and major conflicts over control motivate the teen to detach from family. Conflicts slowly fade as the adolescent matures into an independently functioning adult. Adolescents who are not fortunate enough to have a caring, supportive family are considered to be at risk because the conditions to which they are currently exposed may threaten further development. Valfre (2001: 167) maintains that every adolescent has some family problems because that is the nature of the maturing process. Adolescents are also challenged with numerous social problems.

Early teens seek out their peers and form intense bonds with certain groups. Peer groups are important for the social growth of adolescents. They serve many purposes and help teens cope with their life changes. Other social problems encountered by most adolescents relate to establishing their sexuality. Intimacy (emotional closeness) is limited in early adolescence. Same-sex friends are still of primary importance. As time passes, interest in people of the opposite sex begins to increase (Valfre 2001: 167). Environmental problems are linked to exposure to drugs, crime, prostitution, corruption, and violence. These are very real environmental problems for many teens. Activities that glamorise sex and violence through music, television, and movies and adults who push children into becoming adults too soon are all environmental influences with which teens must cope (Valfre 2001: 167).

The next discussion clarifies the common problems that have an impact on the adolescent mental health and on their personal well-being.

3.2.2.3 Mental health problems

Valfre (2001) introduced the term dysfunction that means impairment in everyday life. It means that the problems faced by adolescents are so severe that they cannot or will not partake in the activities of daily living. When an adolescent's problems or emotions impair performance (school, social, or work) or threaten physical well-being, a mental health problem exists (Valfre 2001: 168).

Bentley (2002) maintains that mental disorders and mental health problems appear in families of all social classes and of all backgrounds. No one is immune. Yet there are children who are at greatest risk by virtue of a broad array of factors. These include genetic propensities; physical problems; intellectual disabilities; low birth weight; family history of mental and addictive disorders; multigenerational poverty; and separation, abuse or neglect from a caregiver (Bentley 2002: 375). Breggin in Seedhouse (2002: 11) offers an alternative view of the troubled adolescent when he refers to their behaviour as "adolescent schizophrenia". He says that people are often labelled schizophrenic during their teen years. Adolescence, with its struggle to form identity in the face of unleashed passions, is linked to mental illness. Whether

adolescents are labelled mentally ill often depends mostly on the love, patience and tolerance of the adults who surround them (Seedhouse 2002: 110).

Valfre (2001: 168) advocates mental health services to help adolescents. The focus of these services is on promoting positive life skills, prevention, and treatment of dysfunctions. Nursing interventions focus on health education, assisting with group and individual therapy, medication management, setting limits, and providing emotional support (Valfre 2001: 168).

In the next section a model of subjective well-being in adolescence is discussed.

3.2.3   A cross-national model of subjective well-being in adolescence

Alsaker and Flammer (1999) propose the cross-national model. This model features diverse cultures and all nationalities that can influence developmental processes of adolescents in their identity and personal well-being. The model targets the adolescent stage as the majority of learners in this stage need to establish their personal well-being. Theories of human development have increasingly focused on interactions among individual development, social conditions, and historical contexts. This is of special importance in adolescence because during this life period, young people are facing decisive choices regarding their identities and futures and their emerging developmental pathways are closely tied with historical, social, and economic conditions of their lives (Alsaker & Flammer 1999: 115).

The cross-cultural aspect, which is linked to the cross-national model of adolescent well-being, merges past experiences, sociability as a member of the community and the state of economy of the learner's family or community. To view this state of well-being at this developmental stage, I feel it is important to understand the influence of these three conditions. I explore the factors such as past experiences, social and the monetary conditions of an adolescent learner in section 4.5.2.The impact of these factors are explored to provide future projections toward the FET learners' sustenance. Reference is made to the bio-psychosocial model (section 2.4) that integrates cultural determinants of subjective well-being and directly addresses the issue of universal versus culture-specific psychological processes. Culture may play a significant role and the connection between

goals and subjective well-being needs to be understood within the context of each individual's life history where culture is an important determinant selected goals to be valued and attained (Mc Adams in Brown & Lent 2000: 337). Added to this, certain personal resources and psychological strengths, such as high socio-economic status, wisdom, and resilience, can facilitate individuals' efforts to achieve higher levels of subjective and physiological well-being (Aspinwall & Staudinger 2003: 332).

FET learners must have strong resources in order to reach the peak of their well-being. The resources should be based on influential factors like socio-economic status in order to strengthen learners' personal ability to stand up to challenges (Van Niekerk & Prins 2001: 40). Adolescent learners need to reach subjective well-being, however, they cannot afford to isolate them self from their bio-psychosocial environment which encompasses their valued culture. Given support and available resources, a high sense of personal well-being is possible for adolescent learners thus enhancing their positive functioning. The next section describes the links between adolescent functioning and psychological well-being.

3.3 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY FUNCTIONING AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

A study by Hasida Ben-Zur (2003: 78) investigates the associations of personal and parental factors with subjective well-being in adolescents. He finds a pattern of positive association between subjective well-being, and internal resources of mastery and optimism in adolescents that suggests that these associations are established early in life. Data collected further imply that adolescents reporting warm relationships and open communications with their parents show higher levels of both internal strength and well-being. Hasida Ben-Zur (2003) states that the findings have implications for child-rearing and education practices, as well as for the prevention of emotional problems in the general population. The study indicates that the more affirmative aspects of adolescent life, namely, internal capability and well-being, merit investigation as they contribute to a better understanding of the significant developmental processes in adolescence (Hasida Ben-Zur 2003: 78).

Based on family models and empirical evidence, it can be expected that adolescents who have a more favourable perception of family functioning also have better mental health and school adjustment. In line with this approach, results show that higher levels of perceived family functioning are significantly related to better adolescent psychological well-being including psychological symptoms and positive mental health and better school adjustment such as perceived academic performance and school conduct. With reference to the relationship between family functioning and adolescent well-being, they experience better family functioning generally and have a lower level of psychological symptoms. This observation is consistent with research findings that a lower level of family competence is related to a higher level of adolescent psychopathology (Prester 2003: 28-29).

3.3.1 Economic hardship

Several theoretical perspectives have been proposed to account for processes by which family structure may affect children's well-being. One such explanation focuses on economic hardship facing single mothers and their children after divorce. According to this perspective, it is not the change in the family structure per se, but rather a decrease in the family's standard of living and parents' adjustment following divorce that is related to children's well-being. This perspective holds that divorce is stressful for both parents and children. How well parents cope is directly related to how well their children can be expected to cope (Vandewater & Lansford 1998: 323). Sylvia Walker, market development manager at Old Mutual, looks at some of the financial implications of getting divorced (O: The Oprah Magazine January 2006: 41). She says transition from married to single status can be daunting. One may have to accept a pronounced reduction in lifestyle as a result of economic hardship especially with children involved.
I have observed that economic hardships can result from high rate of unemployment that leads to poverty situation. Through my interaction with educators in FET schools learners I have gained the impression that the learners at this level are affected by the AIDS pandemic. Parents die and they are left to head their families, they have to look after younger siblings. Due to lack of money to survive these learners are challenged by the economic hardships that impact negatively on their sense of personal well-being.

3.3.2 Family functioning

Study by Prester (2003) shows that positive family functioning is associated with adolescent positive mental health, including life satisfaction, sense of mastery and existential well-being (Prester 2003: 29). Life meaning and existential well-being are regarded as basic motivational forces governing human behaviour. Levels of gratification correlate to the relevant developmental phase of an adolescent which essentially must appear in his/her contextual factors. Interpretations of Prester's study reveal that family functioning exerts a direct and/or indirect impact on adolescent psychological well-being.

Theoretically there are at least two ways by which family functioning might influence adolescent adjustment. Firstly, family functioning can be regarded as a stressor, which affects the emotional life of an adolescent. Secondly, family functioning also affects the willingness of the child to be socialised by the parents and/or the willingness of the parents to socialise the child. It might be a hypothesis to say that family functioning might influence different aspects of adolescent adjustment via such motivational factors. Stronger correlation between family functioning and psychological well-being may be due to the fact that family functioning may have a more direct effect on psychological well-being of adolescent children. This explanation is reasonable because poor family functioning such as family conflict may easily generate stress and frustration which leaves a sense of lack of control in adolescent children. This may in turn spill over to school adjustment (Prester 2003: 29-30).

3.3.3   Inter-parental conflict

One family process, which has emerged as crucial for the prediction of children's well-being, is interparental conflict. Researchers examining parental conflict assume that hostility between parents creates an aversive home environment that is less optimal for children's growth and negatively affects their well-being (Maccoby & Martin in Vanderwater and Lansford 1998: 323). This fact will be taken into consideration in my study.

3.3.4 Family identity crisis

The modern family appears to be in a state similar to the identity crisis of adolescence, as described by Erikson. This identity crisis reflects a state that is characterised by confused attempts to adapt to a new environment and set of values. The individual beset by such a crisis may either survive it to attain a new integration or may fall sick, the outcome depending not only on his/her own capacities but also on the amount of understanding and toleration shown him/her by society (Lomas 1998: 71). A family in an identity crisis may resolve the crisis through getting divorced or even family murder.

Van Wel, Linssen and Abma (2000: 308) conclude that adolescents and young adults maintain a rather good and reasonably stable relationship with their parents providing the family has resolved any potential family identity crisis. Parents also prove to be of lasting importance for the psychological well-being of their growing children, daughters in particular. The article refers to a study by Youniss and Smollar who found that, during adolescence, the relationship between the generations is transformed from one of relatively unilateral authority to one of cooperative negotiation. If this does not occur, it is possible that the family might experience a crisis. Many studies highlight the fact that parents occupy a key position in the well-being and performance of adolescents. In general, parents play a significant role in the formation of the family's identity, as well as in the formation of their children's identities. This concerns the development of identity, a positive self-image, life satisfaction, social competence and other skills, or emotional problems, and problem behaviour. Available data reveal that parental bond remains of considerable importance. Literature reviewed shows that it becomes apparent that in various stages of life the influence of the parents on the self-image and psychological well-being of their children bears more weight than that of peers (Van Wel et al 2000: 308).

Bentley (2002) noted special developmental issues in children and adolescents that focus on their development. The process is characterised by periods of change and reorganisation, making it critical to assess the mental health of children and adolescents in the context of familial, social, and cultural expectations about age-appropriate thoughts, emotions, and behaviour. The range of what is considered normal is wide. Children and adolescents have developmental disorders that are more severe than the ups

and downs in the normal course of development (Bentley 2002: 375) and such problems could exacerbate a family identity crisis if they are not handled correctly.

The above sections outline the realities of what teenage learners are faced with, which is non-essential to them. The next section explains risk and protective factors as predictors of parental well-being that would impact either negatively or positively on an adolescent's well-being.

3.3.5 Parents' risk and protective factors as predictors of parental well-being and behaviour

According to the literature reviewed, risk factors are conditions or variables associated with compromised health, well-being or social performance. DeHaan and MacDermid (1998: 76) define risk factors as those which if present increase the likelihood of a person developing an emotional or behavioural problem at some point in life. Risk factors directly link to parental well-being. In the literature parental well-being is a generalised state reflecting a lack of sadness, tenseness, fatigue, and time pressure. Economic strain refers to the subjective evaluation of one's financial situation. This negative evaluation reflects stressful employment and income difficulties. Economic strain is related to depression, anxiety, and low levels of well-being among men and women (parents). This state mediates relationships between unemployment and low income and psychological well-being in adults (Conger & Elder in Voydanoff & Donnelly 1998: 346). The context of urban poverty has been argued to place adolescents at risk for negative outcomes (DeHaan & MacDermid 1998: 76).

Voydanoff and Donnelly (1998: 344) propose a model in which parental well-being influences parenting behaviour, which in turn, affects adolescent well-being. The article proposes a model that integrates the ecological model of human development based on analysis of risk and protective factors. Protective factors are defined as attributes of individuals and environments, which serve as buffers between a person and stressful situations. They reflect positive mechanisms or processes that reduce the effects of negative processes associated with risk factors (Voydanoff & Donnelly 1998: 345). Protective factors, such as dispositional attributes, family milieu, positive family interaction and the extra familial social environment, decrease the likelihood of such negative outcomes (DeHaan & MacDermid 1998: 76). In this model the researchers

expect protective factors to reduce the impact of economic, family, and community risk factors on parental well-being. These researchers expect parental well-being, marital happiness, and parents' community resources to show positive relationships to nurturing and supportive parenting behaviour among parents of adolescents aged between 10-17 years (Voydanoff & Donnelly 1998: 344). This discussion is reflected in Figure 3.2.
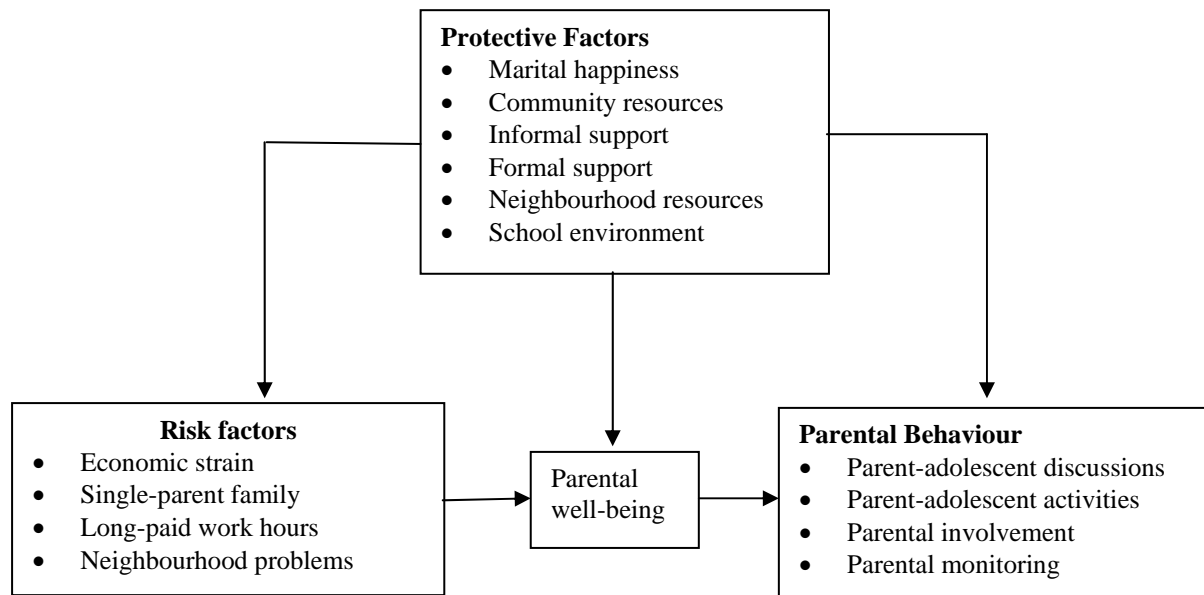
Figure 3.2: Parents risk, protective factors, and risk factors to parental well-being
Source: Voydanoff & Donnely (1998: 345)

As is stated in sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.3, economic strain, single-parent family status, and neighbourhood problems are negatively related to parental well-being (DeHaan & MacDermid 1998: 76). According to Liebkind and Jasinskaja-Lanti (2000: 465), researchers proved that participants who experienced support and understanding provided by at least one parent, reported fewer stress symptoms, behavioural problems and a higher self-esteem.

Protective factors and parental well-being are linked. Marital happiness and parents' community resources may serve as protective factors for those experiencing economic strain, the responsibilities associated with single parenting, long paid work hours, or neighbourhood problems. Marital quality is associated with psychological well-being among men and women (Voydanoff & Donnely 1998: 346). Parents' community resources also serve as coping mechanisms in relation to economic, family and

community risk factors. If the adolescent is caught in a negative cycle in which his/her parents allow the risk factors to outweigh the protective factors, the adolescent is likely to lose his/her sense of control.

3.3.6 Adolescents' sense of control

Rodin in Willis and Reid (1999: 185) noted issues of control and self-determination loom large in adolescence and a sense of one's own efficacy can make the transition to adulthood more successful. Thus, an individual's sense of control in adolescence depends in part on his/her earlier perceptions and experiences and may in turn affect his/her subsequent sense of control in midlife. According to Rodin in Willis and Reid (1999), there is the potential for decreases in sense of control during this transition period. Social comparisons may diminish perceived self-efficacy and physiological changes and social transitions may threaten perceived control and predictability (Hamburg) in Willis & Reid (1999: 185). However, as Heckhausen explained in Willis and Reid (1999) there may be the opportunity for increases in sense of control during this time as well. As in childhood, there are developments in physical and cognitive abilities in adolescence that might positively affect individuals' perceived competence. In addition, there are added age-graded social roles that expand adolescents' opportunities to exert control and experience autonomy (Willis & Reid 1999: 186).

Baumeister and Exline (2000) highlight the link between self-control, health and well-being. It seems likely that a good capacity for self-control would contribute substantially to individual health and well-being. The relevance of self-control to well-being is evident in the fact that many sources of suffering and unhappiness involve breakdowns in self-control (Baumeister & Exline 2000: 39). Findings of Mischel and colleagues in (Baumeister & Exline 2000) show that follow-up measurements during late adolescence and early adulthood indicate that people who had higher self-control were performing better academically and socially over a decade later. A teenage learner can survive the pressures provided he/she uses the strength and available opportunities to gain a sense of control. An additional factor that needs investigation is the effects of optimism and pessimism on the well-being of adolescents.

3.4 EFFECTS OF OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM ON PERSONAL WELL-BEING AND CAREER CHOICE IN ADOLESCENTS

Adolescent learners in the FET band are at a critical stage of their school career in which they must make a choice for their future career. The whole process of career choice is based on the learners' self-knowledge, self-acceptance and potential, all of which are evident in their sense of personal well-being. A high and/or low sense of personal well-being is exhibited through the attitudinal stance taken: either optimistic or pessimistic.

In the United States, high school students sit for the Life Orientation Test Revised (LOT-R) to measure career maturity, career decision-making, career goals, and well-being (Creed, Patton & Bartrum 2002: 42). Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses demonstrate bi-dimensionality rather than un-dimensionality for the LOT-R, with the two factors of optimism and pessimism being largely unrelated. Those with high optimism reported high levels of career planning and exploration, they were more confident about their career decisions, and had more careers related goals. Those with high pessimism reported low levels of career and decision-making knowledge, were more indecisive, and reported low levels of school achievement. For well-being, those with high levels of optimism reported high levels of self-esteem and low levels of psychological distress, whereas those with high levels of pessimism reported low levels of self-esteem and more psychological distress (Creed et al 2002: 42).

Creed et al (2002) cite Scheier and Carver's findings on optimism. These findings reflect a self-regulatory function in determining whether an individual will initiate or maintain working toward desired goals. Carver and Scheier have described their process within their control theory. This theory postulates that as long as individuals' expectancies of eventual success are sufficiently favourable, they are likely to remain engaged in efforts to reach desired goals despite adversities that may arise (Creed et al 2002: 43). However, when individuals' doubts become too severe, they are more likely to give up on their goals in the face of adversity. The differences in individuals' expectancies are assumed to correspond with variations in their affect. Researchers found that optimism was predominantly related to extraversion and positive affect, whereas pessimism was principally associated with neuroticism and negative affect (Creed et al 2002: 43). On the other hand, success that is pronounced by reaching goals depends entirely on the person's

internal standards and maybe belief system. Positive thinking yields achievement of aspired goals based on high subjective well-being. This impact on the adolescent's ability and willingness to risk in a career choice. Optimism versus pessimism also relates to perceived autonomy, motivation and psychological well-being.

3.4.1   Perceived autonomy, motivation and psychological well-being

The transition for teenagers from childhood to adulthood is sometimes filled with conflicts and misunderstandings with adults often over the adolescent's increased desire for autonomy (Wade & Tavris 1998: 523). Research conducted by Chirkov and Ryan (2001) investigates the significance of perceived parental and teacher autonomy-support versus control in two distinct cultural settings: one that has been traditionally been authoritarian or controlling, namely Russia; and one that has been viewed as democratic, namely the United States. Reference is made in the study to self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan in Chirkov & Ryan 2001). This study reports on people's perception regarding socialisation. The authors expected that when people perceived socialising as "a function of others being in control" rather than "autonomy-supportive" it would have a detrimental impact upon self-motivation and well-being, even within the Russian context (Chirkov & Ryan 2001: 619). Autonomy, as defined within the self-determination theory, pertains to actions that are self-endorsed and based on one's integrated values or interests. Autonomous actions have an internal perceived locus of causality, the phenomenal sense emanating from the self. By contrast, when controlled, a person experiences his/her actions as stemming from pressures, rewards, or other forces external to the self (Chirkov & Ryan 2001: 619). According to the self-determination theory, autonomy is a basic human need and opportunities to experience autonomy are critical to well-being. Autonomy concerns volition; independence concerns non-reliance on others. Environments that control and regulate behaviour have a bad impact on self-motivation and well-being. Specifically, controlling environments undermine intrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan in Chirkov & Ryan 2001), the internalisation and integration regulation of extrinsically motivated behaviour and are associated with more distress and less positive affect (Chirkov & Ryan 2001: 619).

Perceiving others as controlling one's behaviour has been shown to have a markedly negative affect on self-motivation and persistence, as well as well-being within the

following spheres of activity: health care, environmentalism, religion, work and sport (Chirkov & Ryan 2001: 620). It remains to be seen what light this fact shed on the attainment of personal well-being by the FET learner.

Siddique and D'Arcy (1984) agree by saying that social stress, actual or perceived, tends to act as a precursor to psychological distress/well-being and exercises a strong direct impact on physical and mental health. Adolescents who perceive their family, school, and peer group life as stressful may be expected to manifest greater emotional distress in the form of depression, anxiety, social, dysfunction, and a reduced level of energized activity (Siddique & D'Arcy 1984: 461). Too much control by adults might deter adolescent learner from a state of autonomy which is a fundamental aspect of psychological well-being as explained in chapter 2.

However, adults know that an adolescent cannot be left to grow up without guidance. Mentoring is an action that impacts on the personal well-being of adolescents.

3.4.2 Mentoring and the personal well-being of adolescents

Mentoring is the process whereby an adult sets an example for a younger or less experienced person to follow. Cannister (1999: 770) describes mentoring by means of three categories:

- Career mentoring is concerned primarily with job advancement. While some personal development may occur, the focus is on obtaining skills and mastering the organisational power structure.
- Academic mentoring focuses on the educational needs of the individual student and involves one-on-one instruction.
- Developmental mentoring considers more general aspects of personal growth.

Erkut and Mokros in Cannister (1999) say people emulate those whom they perceive to be like themselves or whom they desire to become like. Cannister (1999) concludes by saying developmental mentors act as role models.

Bufford et al in Cannister (1999: 770) use mentoring as the technique to explore spiritual well-being, with its religious and existential aspects. This mentoring occurred between faculty and students. Spiritual well-being can be seen as another dimension of personal well-being (Bufford et al in Cannister 1999: 770). They describe spiritual well-being as a combination of religious well-being, which is defined as a person's relationship to God, and existential well-being, which is defined as a person's relationship to the world and includes a sense of meaning, satisfaction and purpose in life. Paloutzian in Cannister (1999) contends that spiritual well-being and its components parts, religious well-being and existential well-being, are integral to a person's perception of the quality of life. I feel that the spiritual or religious aspect of personal well-being motivates and strengthens the adolescent learners' personal well-being and that it leads to an optimistic outlook to life.

Daloz in Cannister (1999) combines the functions of the academic mentor and developmental mentor to produce the "teaching mentor". Daloz points out that teaching mentors are interested not only in conveying knowledge, but also in having students' experience 'the phenomena' of the journey itself. For Daloz, the teaching mentor is a guide along this journey, supporting, challenging, and providing vision for the student.

The above study presents a possibility for similar research in the South African context because achieving personal well-being is core in Life Orientation as a learning area. Mentoring in this learning area will equip adolescent learners with life skills needed in career pathing, decision-making and application of coping mechanisms.

3.4.3 Academics and career choices

Ribner (2000: 19) states that early adolescence is a period of rapid physical, cognitive and social changes. Partly because of the special needs of these young persons, the middle school and junior high school were created to ease the transition from elementary school to high school. Movement between schools is a major stressor for most adolescents. Not only does the work get harder, but other changes in the young person's life also make it more difficult to concentrate on school. Young adolescents going into middle school must deal with new faces, move from class to class, and be more anonymous than they were previously. Simultaneously, they feel more self-conscious.

Most children adapt well to this transition, though some experience such problems as lowered academic motivation, lowered self-esteem, and an increase in behavioural acting out, negative expectations about their abilities, and avoidance of /or resistance to schoolwork. For most adolescents, high school is not only an academic experience but also an opportunity to practise social skills (Ribner 2000: 19).

According to Bijstra and Jackson (1998: 569), investigators have focused on the negative short and long term consequences, which are associated with inadequate social skills. They have shown, for example, that poor social skills in adolescence are related to problems such as loneliness, delinquency, poor school adjustment, poor academic performance, marginal employment records and mental health problems (Bijstra & Jackson 1998: 569).

Teenagers learn new material and skills that prepare them for college or careers. They also participate in clubs and sports activities and spend a considerable amount of time socialising with friends. The literature reviewed claims that high school dropout rate has declined but it remains a serious problem. According to Ribner (2000: 20), a teen's dropping out of high school is usually a result of a combination of factors, such as poor reading skills, early school failures, low motivation, impoverished background and disrupted family situation discussed in section 3.3. In other words, such a teen lacks a sense of well-being.

It is recommended by Ribner (2000: 20) that these mentioned factors need to be addressed as early as possible in order to keep these learners at school. Ribner suggests that the nature and quality of the young person's school environment needs to be assessed to maximise his/her experience. High school is the time that many adolescents begin to think consciously about making career decisions. Many factors enter into the equation, including abilities, personality, parents' support and chance. Gender is still a major factor in career decisions: Females are still socialised into traditional roles, and counsellors often steer young women into gender-typed careers. For many minority adolescents, career choices are limited by the absence of role models, lack of economic resources, and racial discrimination. Mental health professionals need to assist all young people to make career choices based on their individual abilities and help them believe they have the power to influence their lives (Ribner 2000: 20).

As I am an education specialist in Life Orientation, I recognise the void in learners who lack personal well-being. This study intends to ascertain the needs of FET learners for personal well-being from a psycho-educational perspective to offer learners opportunities to address this need.

3.5   SUMMARY

The adolescent learner tends to be under increased pressure and at the same time they are deprived of meaningful support; they are faced with increased demands and challenges. The world in which young people are growing up today is very different from the world their parents inhabited when young, and they face an accelerated pace of social change that would have been unfamiliar, even to those who grew up a decade ago (Weare 2000: 3). Effects of social change are more articulated in the external environmental problems. However, problems that are experienced by the adolescent learner that emanate from the family lead to internal problems which directly impact on their personal well-being. FET learners experiment with independence, however, the environment is not conducive for that developmental process. Environmental factors impact negatively on adolescent learners' mental health and range from economic hardships to family identity crisis. Their sense of control is tested but the strategies which they apply fail due to lack of support.

According to Neukrug et al in Mda and Mothata (2000: 92), learners are now faced with an accelerating crime rate, unemployment, drug abuse, and a lack of family support (increasing neglect, soaring divorce rates, single parent households, often living below the poverty level), a sense of depersonalisation in schools and continuing lack of quality education (particularly black learners). Furthermore, young people are being forced to grow up much faster than previous generations and they no longer experience a protected stage of childhood. Through television and other media they are exposed to adult thinking, experiences, problems and pressures in ways that they may well not be equipped to handle (Weare 2000: 3). External environmental problems in adolescent are manifested in internal developmental problems that are more emotional hence reference is made to adolescent mental health which lacks balance.

Young people often have significantly different values and attitudes to those of adults. This generation gap makes it hard for adults and young people to understand each other. This can be a source of anxiety for adults and certainly for the young. Many of them have become alienated from the political process, and feel they have no voice in their own community, let alone in wider society. As a result of social fragmentation and alienation of generations, the peer group has become ever more powerful as perhaps the only source of social support and reference (Weare 2000: 3).

The mental state of teenage learners is mostly destabilised because they are confronted with serious challenges. As a result their well-being is not maintained. In the academic sphere adolescent learners are supposed to reach expectations that are set by external forces such as progression to the next grade. In spite of the emotional problems that they encountered and that affect their personal mental well-being, they need to be motivated to make career choices. Pessimism is higher than the positive optimistic attitudes that are needed to enhance personal well-being. Often these young people have nowhere to turn to for help and no one to listen to them.

 The following chapter presents the research design and methodology. The literature study in chapters two and three will form a framework for the study of the needs of FET learners for personal well-being.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter highlights the research design and methodology, which made it possible for me to ascertain the needs of FET learners as related to their personal well-being. This includes an explanation of the methods by which data were gathered. The literature that was reported in chapters two and three provided a theoretical framework to the research. Findings were interpreted in the light of the literature. Findings are presented in chapter five.

Taylor (2000: 1) says research is an integral part of society. It is a means of exploring one's own environment to educate oneself and to explain some facts or events. The research purpose influences the type of information that is sought from study to study. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches can be used (Taylor 2000: 1-3). However, I only used qualitative techniques to research my problem. Taylor (2000: 79) says qualitative techniques are designed to give real and stimulating meaning to the phenomena by involving the researcher directly or indirectly in the process.

4.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

The research problem stated in section 1.3, states that the study addresses the research question namely to ascertain the needs for personal well-being of FET learners. The literature studied in chapter 2 highlighted the general key features of personal well-being. In chapter 3, the FET learners' needs regarding personal well-being were researched in the available literature. The literature indicates that the needs regarding personal well-being of adolescent learners in the FET phase are not always met. These learners are challenged by contextual circumstances which make it difficult for them to achieve a sense of personal well-being. The following section states the aims of the research. These are presented in the form of goals for this study.

4.3 AIMS OF RESEARCH

Speaking in general, the systematic, empirical standards of good research are often pursued in the name of four basic research goals: exploration, description, explanation, and evaluation (Ruane 2005: 12). My study addressed only one of these goals namely the exploratory goal. This goal is explained to clarify its relevance to this research.

Exploratory research is typically conducted in the interest of 'getting to know' or increasing understanding of a new or little researched setting, group, or phenomenon; it is used to gain insight into a research topic. The general aim of my study was addressed by means of a focussed literature study that served as a theoretical framework for the empirical research. This chapter describes the empirical research that was planned to examine to what extent learners and educators recognised the importance of personal well-being and to what extent they ascertained the FET learners' need for personal well-being.

Consequently exploratory research tends to utilise relatively small samples of subjects that permit the researcher to get 'up-close' first hand information. In my study, I planned to do group work (see section 4.5.2) with a relatively small group of FET learners in order to gain personal information from these learners. Group work allowed me to interact with the group of FET learners and to gain a first hand understanding of their need for personal well-being. To facilitate this in-depth understanding I interacted with the learners. I then understood, acknowledged and reflected on their experiences that could hamper their sense of well-being.

Exploratory research often produces qualitative data, in other words, evidence presented in words, pictures, or some other narrative form that best captures the research participants' genuine experiences and understanding (Ruane 2005: 11). The FET learners who participated in this research were given time to become aware of the role that personal well-being plays in people's lives. Thereafter, they explored the concept of personal well-being under my guidance and finally they verbalised their feelings regarding their own personal well-being. The group work activities allowed them to explore their state of well-being. The observations and facilitated discussions around 'personal well-being' generated a holistic description of their experiences and that

informed them of the state of their own well-being. The fieldwork through group work activity led to the learner participants' reflection of their state of personal well-being through naïve sketches.

4.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

"Research designs are constructed plans and strategies developed to seek, explore and discover answers to quantitative and qualitative research questions. Research design begins with observations. The researcher must observe a need to conduct the proposed research. Observations may be formal or informal; complex or simple, they need to be evident" (Taylor 2000: 165-166). Further, Taylor (2000: 168) also maintains that research designs are constructed to enable the researcher to answer the research questions that are posed in the study. Such designs also aid the researcher in determining the types of observations to make, how to make them, and the type of research to employ (quantitative or qualitative).

As I am a Life Orientation facilitator who has observed LO educators confronted with learners' problems around their identity, self-image, and self-concept, I realised how these problems impacted on the personal well-being of FET learners. My initial observation of the problem culminated in the major purpose of my research design:

- What are the FET learners' needs for their personal well-being?

The main question was underpinned by the following sub-questions:
- What are the identified aspects of personal well-being?
- What are the common problems that affect adolescents' personal well-being?
- Can adolescent learners ascertain their needs toward personal well-being?

In the following sections, I discuss elements of the research design in detail as I used them in this study. These included the qualitative approach, factors which contribute to such an approach as well as the involvement of the researcher, use of a natural setting, qualitative methods and the selection of the participants.

4.4.1 Qualitative approach

Mason (2002: 3-4) identifies a loose working definition, of qualitative research as follows. Qualitative research is:

- Grounded in a philosophical position, which is broadly 'interpretivist' in the sense that it is concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced, produced or constituted.

- Based on methods of data generation, which are both flexible and sensitive to the social context in which data are produced.

- Based on methods of analysis explanation and argument building, which involve understandings of complexity, detail and context.

According to Sherman and Webb (in Blaxter, Hughes & Tight 2001: 64), 'qualitative' implies a direct concern with experience, as it is 'lived', 'felt', or 'undergone'. I applied this method to explore learners' needs to reach personal well-being. As Miles and Huberman stated (in Gray 2004: 320), most qualitative research involves a number of characteristics:

- It is conducted through intense contact within a 'field' or real life setting. I facilitated discussions with the learner participants in a classroom situation to focus on the exploration of their need for personal well-being (see section 4.4.1.2).

- The researcher's role is to gain a holistic or integrated overview of the study, including the perceptions of participants. In my study field notes were kept of learners' understanding and expression of personal well-being. These are discussed in more detail in section 4.4.1.3.

- Themes that emerge from the data are reviewed with participants for verification. Meaning attributed to aspects that surfaced during the group work was probed in order to ascertain whether participants acknowledged the importance of personal well-being (see section 4.4.1.1).

- The main focus of research is to understand the ways in which people act and account for these actions. Ascertaining needs of learner participants might also be expressed through their behaviour and mannerisms and this was captured to inform recommendations on coping strategies (see section 4.4.1.4).

- Qualitative data are open to multiple interpretations.

4.4.1.1 Involvement of the researcher

Qualitative research is focused on the meaning and the involvement of the researcher in the process. As an education department district official, I am professionally involved in support and development of educators to enable them to understand learners' needs. My practical, broad knowledge of problems that confront learners made it possible for me to explore the learners' challenges first-hand. A high level of communication and analytical skills were needed to report the full essence of the experience accurately, reflecting holistic and detailed views of the participants (Taylor 2000: 79). Intensive interaction with participants' encouraged them to explore their personal well-being in their own context. My aim was to capture my learner participants' condition and situation as it is, the way it was expressed in my presence. I noted the learner participants' preparedness to open-up to me in the initial session that confirmed the rapport established.

4.4.1.2 Natural setting

Qualitative research that is conducted in a natural setting relies upon the uniqueness of individuals and their environment. I aspired to preserve the natural setting of learners. Therefore, I carried out the research with learners in their real life setting at school and in their own residential area. This allowed these learners to continue with their life unhindered. Even the group work discussions that they attended in order to participate in my research were seen as part of their school curricular activities.

4.4.1.3 Use of qualitative methods

I chose qualitative methods due to insight that I gained from the literature on research methods. Qualitative methods encounter social phenomena as they naturally occur. Silverman in Payne and Payne (2004: 175) says that qualitative methods are "especially interested in how ordinary people observe and describe their lives". Blaxter et al (2001: 64) further clarify the use of qualitative methods. They say they are concerned with collecting and analysing information in as many forms, chiefly non-numeric, as possible. They explore, in as much detail as possible, smaller numbers of instances or examples, which are seen as being interesting, and aim to achieve 'depth' rather than 'breadth'. The

following points about qualitative paradigms were adapted for my study from Oakley in Blaxter et al (2001: 65):

- I was concerned with understanding behaviour from actors' own frame of reference. Participants in my study were encouraged to display and express their perception of their sense of personal well-being. I found myself at a vantage point because from 'insider' perspective, I was close to the data. As an 'insider' I was able to participate in this study that revealed the learners' innermost feelings and experiences.

- I adhered to naturalistic and uncontrolled observation. I provided the participants with the space to explore the phenomenon of well-being and I observed them with minimised interference while this exploration took place.

- There was a sense of subjectivity as well-being is very personal and innermost state. The group work technique provided a favourable space for the learners to conduct subjective introspection on personal well-being.

- My study was grounded, discovery-oriented, exploratory, expansionist (spread up approach), descriptive, inductive and process-oriented. I, as a researcher, together with the participants, worked on the manner in which they explored their sense of personal well-being. My intention was to use the group work process to guide and steer them towards this realisation.

- Valid, real, rich and deep data were gained in the practical field research. This qualified my research as being qualitative as it revealed the participants' deep-seated feelings and experiences.

- Ungeneralisable single case studies of participants brought to the fore what transpired in their lives and how it impacted on their personal well-being.

- The study "assume (d) a dynamic reality" (Blaxter et al 2001: 65) as the participants reflected on their daily lives.

Payne and Payne (2004: 175) refer to qualitative methods as an umbrella term covering different types of research that share certain features. Qualitative methods:

- have the core concern to seek out and interpret the meanings that people bring to their own actions, rather than describing any regularities or statistical associations between 'variables'. The group work phases provided an opportunity for participants to become aware and further to explore dimensions of personal well-being that were ultimately personalized.

- treat actions as part of the whole social process and the context, rather than as something that can be extracted and studied in isolation. My fieldwork dealt with learner participants in their environments: from family to school community, local community to society. All these socio-ecological structures might have influenced their sense of personal well-being.

- utilise non-representative, small samples of people. My study involved a group of ten Grade 10 learners who constituted the focus group for my research.

- focus on the detail of human life. The study was based on personal well-being as a human dimension emanating from emotions and mental health; the aim was to ascertain the needs of FET learners in attaining personal well-being.

- explore the data they encounter and allow ideas to emerge from them (Payne & Payne 2004: 176). In the exploration phase of the group work sessions the participants described their sense of personal well-being. As a researcher, I added to their insight from what I had learned about personal well-being from the literature that I reviewed in chapters 2 and 3.

The intensity of the qualitative methods attracted me to use them. They allowed the participants to discover their sense of personal well-being and endorsed all the natural human conditions of personal well-being so that none could be compromised or overlooked. My involvement was clearly pronounced and this allowed me to work closely with my research participants.

4.4.1.4 Selection of participants

Participants were selected from a relevant group of people. Selected participants in this study formed a focus group that explored the concept of personal well-being during the group work activities. The selection of the sample was defined in relation to the particular conceptual framework of the study. This is called a 'theoretical sample' (Seale, Gobo, Gubrium & Silverman 2004: 68). Participants were FET learners who were in the adolescent stage of development. Grade 10 learners were selected because the study addresses the LO learning outcome of 'personal well-being' that is dealt with in the Grade 10 syllabus. There were ten participants, five boys and five girl learners. Their age group ranged from 15-18 years which put them in the adolescent period of development.

They reflect the cultural mix of the school which comprises: Sesotho, Tswana, Pedi, Xhosa, Zulu, Tsonga and Venda speaking learners.

4.5   RESEARCH METHOD

The research method included a variety of activities. The first subsection explains the participatory action research that was applied to investigate the problem. The second subsection details group work as the participatory action research technique, which was suitable to ascertain the learners' needs for personal well-being. Thirdly, various data collection techniques that were used in the group work sessions are explained and finally, the data analysis techniques are given.

4.5.1   Participatory action research

Participatory action research is defined as a study that involves participants as an integral part of the design. Qualitative methods are used in order to gain an understanding of and insight into the life worlds of these research participants. Most types of this research have an explicit commitment to the empowerment of participants and to changing the social conditions of participants (Mouton 2001: 150). Participatory research has been expressed most generally as a process, which combines three activities: research, education and action (Hall in Collins 1999: 3). Such research is a participative, person-centred inquiry which does research with people, not on them or about them (Heron in Collins 1999: 3). The participants are researchers themselves who are in pursuit of answers to the questions of their daily struggles and survival (Tandon in Collins 1999: 3).

I planned to use the participatory action approach in order to research personal well-being with the learners while simultaneously providing guidance and support. The group work technique was ideally suited to participatory research as it continually involved the learners. In so doing, they became aware of their needs to attain personal well-being, learned to explore their personal well-being and to personalise it.

4.5.2   Group work

Group work is a technique that allows the participatory research approach to be realised. I used personal well-being as a theme to work with the selected FET learners in the three stages that comprise group work:

- Awareness
- Exploration
- Personalisation that constitutes group work.

Learner participants investigated their need to grow at a personal level in order to reach personal well-being. Although each session's duration was planned to last for 45 minutes to an hour, each one of the group work stages took one session to complete. The venue for the sessions was at school in a secluded classroom to avoid any disturbance.

4.5.2.1 Awareness in the first stage

The opening first session in the group work entailed an introduction of the group members to each other, a formulation of the ground rules (reported in ethical considerations section 4.7) that underpinned the sessions. I introduced myself with emphasis to my role as an educator and researcher. The learner participants joined in the research project to participate as co-researchers. Participants introduced themselves as FET grade ten learners. Personal introductions involved the use of an icebreaker that entailed one letter from their names. Learners ascribed a positive human quality to the chosen letter about themselves personally (see Appendix C). Participants' chronological age was mentioned (to confirm that they are in the adolescent stage of development) and familial historical background was disclosed.

The awareness took place in the second session of group work. As the facilitator of the process, I alluded to the concept of personal well-being but I did not directly name it as the participants needed to discover for themselves what the group work theme was. The facilitation revolved around the planned activities that helped the learners to become aware of the importance of personal well-being in people's lives.

The awareness phase allowed the learners to identify the concept well-being as an essential feature in a person's outlook on life. The awareness of the need for personal well-being was, however, not directly linked to the participants' personal lives. It was discussed as an abstract concept and they merely took note of the fact that the need for personal well-being played an important role in people's lives. This was done to make the discussion as non-threatening as possible.

The following were planned activities in the awareness phase:
- Learners were requested to identify a human quality which makes one feel special and happy. I wrote all their answers on a flip chart without ignoring a single response.
- I gave each learner a copy of a feelings' facial chart and the learners marked what pictures showed happy and content faces.
- I gave the learners a chance to choose pictures from magazines which reflected people who were happy and content.

After these three activities, I asked learners to give a word or phrase that summarised the theme of discussion. Once the theme of the discussion had been identified as a need for personal well-being, the learners responded to the following instruction by each writing a naïve sketch to the following question:
- What makes people feel good about themselves?

After this had been completed, the awareness stage had achieved its purpose. The focus of the group work had been established, namely personal well-being. Requesting the learners to go home and think about personal well-being terminated the second group work session.

4.5.2.2 Exploration in the second stage

The exploration phase entailed gaining knowledge and insight. The background information to this stage was the analysis of personal well-being that was based on chapters 2 and 3. The learners were requested to collect facts, formulate opinions and make statements about the theme, personal well-being. During the exploration stage, the

learners investigated the essential qualities of personal well-being. These included the fact that there was a subjective need for personal well-being, that it reflected a person's emotional state and was linked to the psychological, social, spiritual and mental health and wellness of an individual.

The participants worked in two groups of five to discuss these aspects and they reported back to the larger group. Positive interaction took place as the two groups complemented each other's feedback. I made additions regarding essential aspects based on my literature study that they might have missed. The discussions and the information that were shared during the exploration stage led to insight about their own needs for personal well-being. However, the exploration stage was still focused on external facts about well-being although each participant silently examined his or her own need for personal well-being.

During the third and final stage of group work, each participant was given the opportunity to measure his/her own need for personal well-being against the ideal that was set out in the exploration phase.

4.5.2.3 Personalisation in the third stage

The personalisation stage allowed the participants to apply the insights that they had acquired during exploration to their own lives. The identified aspects of personal well-being and the resulting needs came to the fore in the personal reflections embodied in the naïve sketches. At this stage learners were requested to describe in writing their experience of the group work sessions and activities. The participants were requested to respond to the following questions:

- How do you deal with your need for personal well-being?
- How did you experience working on this group work research project?

Throughout the group work process, the researcher collected data. In the next section, the process of data collection is discussed.

4.5.3   Data collection

Various techniques were used during the group work session in order to gather data from the research participants. These included the use of focus groups, naïve sketches, observation and field notes.

4.5.3.1   Focus groups

Focus groups are a means of collecting data at the same time from several people (who usually share common experiences) and which concentrates on their shared meanings. Focus groups are a special type of group discussion with a narrowly focused topic that is discussed by group members of equal status who do not know one another (Payne & Payne 2004: 103; Ruane 2005: 157). As implied by the name, focus groups focus on particular issues that are introduced in a predetermined order as carefully worded, open-ended questions or topics. I used focus groups in order to allow the selected FET learners to engage with the personal well-being phenomenon.

The composition of the group consisted of ten selected participants. The group members were chosen because they had similar education, social status, and all were learners in the FET phase (Brannen & Nilsen in Payne & Payne 2004: 105; Cozby 2004: 127; Tashakorri & Teddle 2003: 308). Similarity and homogeneity were considered in selection of participants. In my study my participants fulfilled these requirements. The focus group activities and discussions were planned and integrated in the three group work sessions.

Focus groups show three essential components. They:
* are a research method that is devoted to data collection.
* locate the interaction in a group discussion as the source of the data.
* acknowledge the researcher's active role in creating the group discussion
  for data collection purposes (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2004: 264; Janesick 2004: 81).

I used the focus group technique embedded in the group work process to collect data. The interaction between the participants and myself as the researcher informed the data

collected. I facilitated the group discussion in order to gain rich personal information about participants' need for personal well-being.

Focus groups force people to consider how they feel about issues in light of other people's feelings. The essence is the interaction between the members of the group, seeing how people moderate their views, react to different perspectives and manage their disagreements. The researcher assumes responsibility to chair the discussion, steering it occasionally and ensuring that everyone has his or her say (Moore 2000: 124; Ruane 2005: 158). Focus groups as a qualitative methodology involve an informal, yet structured group discussion, which is usually based on series of questions (the focus group 'schedule'). I acted as a 'moderator' for the group: posing questions, keeping the discussion flowing, and enabling group members to participate fully. Thus, I facilitated and focussed the group discussion, and actively encouraged group members to interact with each other (Silverman 2004:177-178; Denscombe 2003: 169; O'Leary 2004: 165; Gomm 2004: 173; Ruane 2005: 158).

It has been maintained that social interaction between group members produces a dynamic and insightful exchange of information impossible in any one-to-one interview situation (Ruane 2005: 157; Tashakkori & Teddle 2003: 309). Johnson in Silverman (2004: 178) maintains that the focus group technique is used within the classroom or in the field, to study the social world, or to attempt to change. Therefore, the focus group is part of the change process, for example, it is a way of getting learners to define what they want to happen (Gomm 2004: 173).

Focus groups have a number of distinct advantages. Hence in this research, this technique was implemented during the group work process:
- Data collection is relatively quick.
- It is 'naturalistic' as focus groups include a range of communicative processes such as storytelling, joking, arguing, boasting, challenge, and disagreement.
- It is well-suited to explore 'sensitive topics', for instance, personal well-being.
- The group context facilitates personal disclosures (Farquhar with Das; Frith in Silverman 2004: 180).

- It allows respondents to react to and build upon the responses of other group members, creating a 'synergistic effect'. In my study learners could respond to one another, and comments triggered a variety of responses (Stewart & Shamdasani in Silverman 2004: 180; Cozby 2004: 127). In the context of agreement and support, one or more focus group members enthusiastically extended, elaborated, or embroidered an initially sketchy account (Silverman 2004: 180).
- In my study the focus groups had alternative purposes other than research. Such purposes were: therapy, decision-making, education, organising, or behaviour change (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2004: 264).

In complementary fashion, focus groups studies use follow-up interviews with individual participants to explore specific opinions and experiences in more depth, as well as to produce narratives that address the continuity of personal experiences over time. It is possible for focus groups to be used in combination with other methods including participant observation (Janesick 2004: 81; Duncan & Morgan in Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2004: 267). For the purpose of this research, I used focus groups during the group work process where learner participants ascertained their own needs for personal well-being. The outcomes of the group work activities were therapeutic because learners were informed of strategies of how to cope in a state of lowered personal well-being. I planned to offer follow-up individual interviews in order to deal with sensitive issues that were related to the identified needs for personal well-being.

4.5.3.2   Naïve sketch

The naïve sketch is a method of data collection similar to open-ended questions. The single most important characteristic of the naïve sketch is that one open-ended question/statement is posed and individuals are asked to respond to the question in writing (Burns & Grove 1997: 368-370). In this study this method was used during two of the three group work phases. Learners individually engaged with the following questions during the exploration and personalisation phase:
- What makes people feel good about themselves? (Awareness phase)
- How do you deal with your need for personal well-being? (Personalisation phase)

- How did you experience working on this group work research project?
  (Personalisation phase)

Through these naïve sketches learners personally reflected on and reported their insights regarding their own personal well-being.

4.5.3.3 Observation and field notes

According to Denscombe (2003: 192), observation offers the social researcher a distinct way of collecting data. It does not rely on what people say, do or think. It is more than that. Instead, it draws on the direct evidence of the eye to witness events first hand. It is based on the premise that, for certain purposes, it is best to observe what actually happens (Denscombe 2003: 192). Observations in my study were characterised by the following:

- Direct participant observation.
- Fieldwork characterised by dedication to collect data in real life situations.
- Field notes were captured soon after the session.
- Natural settings as fieldwork observation occurred in situations that would have occurred whether or not the research had taken place. In my study the natural setting is based on the fact that it takes place in the learner participant usual school environment. It becomes unnatural because learner participants were selected among the whole grade ten-learner population in the school.

The whole point was to observe things as they normally happened (Denscombe 2003: 192; Singleton, Straits & Miller-Sraits1993: 516). The advantage of qualitative field research was the presence of an observing, thinking researcher at the scene of action. The research made use of direct observation hence it was vital to make full and accurate notes of what happened. The field notes that were kept included both empirical observations and interpretations (Babbie 2002: 302). Field notes are notes made by the researcher 'in the field'. Field notes are useful to record feelings about the dynamic data collected, acquired outside the immediate context of an interview or focus group, or ideas for analysis (Ritchie & Lewis 2003: 137).

In this study, learner participants were observed in a natural learning situation i.e. a classroom. Data collection took place by means of the observation process, while the participants reflected on their needs regarding their personal well-being. Essential personal details about each participant were recorded in field notes. The findings and interpretations are reported in chapter five.

4.5.4 Data analysis

The data analysis process involved the transformation of a variety of data generating experiences (talk, observations, memories and so on) into text. This is a near universal step in the process of qualitative research. The transformation of various sources of data into text and the transcription of experience into units of communicative meaning (i.e. words and sequences of words) was itself both an act of analysis and often the prerequisite for subsequent forms of qualitative analysis (David & Sutton 2004: 193).

The learner participants were expected to reflect and express their own versions of their need for personal well-being. In the awareness phase they became aware of the fact that a need for personal well-being existed. In the exploration phase they described feelings and emotions that highlighted the importance of the need for personal well-being. In the personalisation phase, the participants applied the explored dimensions of personal well-being as applicable to their own immediate need for personal well-being. Based on my role as a researcher and observer I had to translate every action and experience that occurred during the group work process to ascertain whether it linked to the learners' need to attain personal well-being.

4.5.4.1 Working with words

Due to the qualitative nature of this research, the focus was on the analysis of words. The choice of qualitative word analysis was best suited to meanings of the research question of the study. I agree with O' Leary (2004: 193) who has two concerns regarding the reduction of meaning to numbers:

- There are many social meanings that cannot be reduced to numbers.

- Even if this reduction were possible, there would be a loss of "richness" associated with the process (O'Leary 2004: 193).

It was not appropriate to reduce personal well-being to numbers; therefore qualitative word analysis was a suitable alternative. In my study words used by learner participants to explain well-being were highlighted to determine the meaning attributed to them in connection with learner personal well-being.

4.5.4.2 Logic and methods

Whether it be qualitative or quantitative data, the starting point of any form of analysis is to move from raw data to meaningful understanding. In qualitative analysis, understandings are built by a process of uncovering and discovering themes that run through the raw data, and by interpreting the implication of those themes for the research questions. The process of qualitative data analysis involves the use of inductive (discovering) and/or deductive (uncovering) reasoning to generate and interpret relevant themes in order to achieve meaningful understanding (O'Leary 2004: 195).

There is no clear-cut distinction between deductive reasoning (hypothesis verification/theory testing) associated with quantitative research, and inductive reasoning (to derive theory from specific instances) seen as qualitative research. Data analysis is often dependent on both inductive and deductive cycles of reasoning. An example given is that a study may be designed in a way that theory can emerge through inductive processes, but as those theories begin to emerge from data, it is likely that one move towards a process of confirmation. Their generation depends on progressive verification. Inductive approach allows the researcher to alternate explanations (O'Leary 2004: 196).

In the group work activities learners were directed to investigate feelings using a feelings' facial chart which in effect directed them to this question statement: 'How are you'. Response to this statement was more superficial to say: 'I am fine, thank you'. Through the phases of group work learner participants learned to reflect deeply about their responses out of reflection which was actually a personal evaluation. In evaluation it was possible to tease out emotions felt and thoughts involved that brought out two aspect of personal well-being i.e. emotive and mental cognitive.

What defines qualitative data analysis is its ability to extract meaning from its content. The process of data analysis is the attempt to identify the presence or absence of meaningful themes, common and/or divergent ideas, beliefs and practices (David & Sutton 2004: 191).

The literature that I reviewed in chapters two and three served as a point of departure towards discovering various aspects of personal well-being. Once these aspects had been identified, the practical research in this study ascertained the need for and importance of a sense of personal well-being in FET learners. The contextual factors of the research participants led to perceptions of their need for personal well-being. This was compared to what was found in the reviewed literature. Deductive reasoning uncovered other hidden aspects about their need for personal well-being.

4.5.4.3   Thematic analysis

To move from raw data to meaningful understanding is a process reliant on the generation/exploration of relevant themes. While many of the themes were likely to be discovered through inductive analysis, themes were also identified through engagement with literature, prior experiences of the researcher, and the nature of the research question. Themes also emerged from insights garnered through the process data collection. Whether themes were inductively generated or deductively verified, there was a need for rich engagement with the naïve sketches that made up my raw data. This process of 'textual' engagement occurred as the data was collected and involved reading, over viewing, and annotating the text prior to systematic thematic coding (O'Leary 2004: 196).

Qualitative data can be explored for the words that are used, the concepts that are discussed, the linguistic devices that are called upon, and the non-verbal cues noted by the researcher:
- Exploring words can lead to themes through exploration of their repetition, or through exploration of their context and usage.
- Exploring concepts that are deductively uncovered. They are derived from 'standard' social science categories of exploration i.e. power, race, class, gender, etc.

- Exploring non-verbal cues essential to capture feeling behind the words, the body
  language that accompanies the words, or even words not spoken (O'Leary 2004:
  196-197).

The various theories about personal well-being that were dealt with in chapters 2 and 3
were clarified by means of my selected research methods and techniques. The thematic
exploration was adequately addressed by means of group work activities.

In order to deal with the volume of data that the participants' naïve sketches and as well
as my observation and field notes generated, it was necessary to code the data.

4.5.4.4   Coding

Coding is a key process in the analysis of qualitative research data. By means of coding
individual pieces of data are classified or categorised (Babbie 2002: 376). Qualitative
coding entails three basic procedures:
- Noticing relevant phenomena.
- Collecting examples of those phenomena.
- Analysing those phenomena in order to find commonalities, patterns, and structures
  (Esterberg 2002: 158).

Open coding applied forms part of the analysis that pertains specifically to naming and
categorising of phenomena through close examination of data. During open coding the
data are broken into discrete parts, closely examined, and compared for similarities and
differences, and questions are asked about the phenomena as reflected in the data.
Through this process, one's own and others' assumptions about phenomena are
questioned or explored leading to new discoveries (Babbie 2002: 376, Esterberg 2002:
158).
According to Richards (2005: 87-88) there are sorts of qualitative coding that is
'descriptive, topic and analytical':
- Descriptive coding deal with stored information about learner participants enlisting
  attributes like: identity, age and positive quality ascribed to letter name.

- Topic coding deal with categorizing and labelling responses linking them to relevant aspects of well-being.

- Analytical coding provides the researcher with an opportunity to do an interpretative task which was done by means of finding to raw data in learner participants' responses (Richards 2005: 87-88).

In this research coding took place when the data gathered during the research were examined with learner participants. In the two literature chapters, I identified various facets of personal well-being. Learner participants then explored and reflected on their need for personal well-being in the focus groups through the group work sessions. I personally felt that coding was a thread that linked all the forms of data analysis from working with words, induction, deduction and thematic analysis.

4.5.5   Presenting the results

Presentation of result is the final stage of qualitative research process, that of reporting and presenting the findings. The circularity of the process is one of the key objectives of qualitative social research. My results explored, unravelled and explained the complexity of different social worlds. My challenge was to represent the social world that had been researched in such a way that it remained grounded in the accounts of the research participants. My report task involved an active construction and representation of the form and nature of the phenomena being explored. This report was the culmination of the analysis process. It provided an opportunity for further thought as the data were assembled into a coherent structure to convey the research evidence. Data were reanalysed, reassessed and assembled into a final package that displayed the findings with ordered and reflective commentary (Ritchie & Lewis 2003: 287). The report of the findings of this research is recorded in detail in chapter five; the conclusions and recommendations are given in chapter six.

In order to ensure the quality of my study, I addressed the requirement of reliability and validity.

4.6.1 Reliability

In the abstract, reliability is a matter of whether a particular technique, applied repeatedly to the same object, yields the same result each time (Babbie 2002: 136). Reliability relates to how well one has carried out research. It is considered reliable if another researcher carrying out the same research activities with the same kind of group would be likely to replicate pre-findings although their findings need not be identical (Wisker 2001: 283). Reliability in this study can be ensured if the same activities are used in a similar group work process. Those learners from more or less the same socio-economic contextual situations should also identify personal well-being as the topic of the discussion.

4.6.2   Validity

The validity of qualitative research is central to the whole issue of cohesion in the research between the conceptual framework methods, questions and findings. If the methods, approaches and techniques really fit and measure the issue, then the findings are likely to be valid. In conventional usage, validity refers to the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under consideration. All social life, including social research, operates on agreements about terms used and concepts they represent (Babbie 2002: 139-140).

My study dealt with sensitive, human-orientated issues that need capturing through qualitative data gathering vehicles and by means of qualitative analysis that are relevant to the specific context (Wisker 2001: 253). I used techniques for the group work sessions that allowed the participants to investigate their own personal way of identifying their need for well-being. This provided qualitative evidence that was captured first hand.

4.7   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Babbie (2002: 56) defines ethical as conforming to the standards of conduct of a given profession or group. In this research I respected the privacy of all the learners who were

involved in my research. As an education specialist I conformed to and considered the South African Constitution and the South African Schools Act of 1996.

Day one of my practical research involved first meeting with the selected grade ten learners to form the focus group that played part of group work activities. I introduced myself to them as a researcher and an educator who serves as a District official in charge of learner support and intervention. My learner participants were allowed to introduce themselves to join and belong to the group; ground rules (see appendix B) were set to regulate group sessions and activities. This meant that my research participants gave me their informed consent to participate in my study, I guaranteed them confidentiality and anonymity. I agreed to protect them from any harm that might possibly emanate from this research and respected their right to privacy.

4.7.1 Informed consent

This criterion emphasises the importance of both accurately informing participants as to the nature of the research and obtaining their verbal or written consent to participate (Babbie 2002: 62). The participants in this group set up and followed the ground rules that they set when they committed themselves to participate. They took a stand not to violate their rules.

4.7.2   Confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality means avoiding attributing any comments, in reports or presentations, to identified participants (Ritchie & Lewis 2003: 67). A research project guarantees confidentiality when the researcher can identify a given person's responses but essentially promises not to do so publicly. Whereas a research project is confidential, it was the researcher's responsibility to make the fact clear to respondents (Babbie 2002: 58). In this study the use of focus groups exposed participants' private experiences. Confidentiality needed to be maintained between the researcher and participants as well as between the participants themselves. Confidentiality was laid down as the key ground rule.

Anonymity means the identity of those taking part not being known outside the research team (Ritchie & Lewis 2003: 67). Identity of participant learners was kept confidential by the researcher and the LO/Guidance educator who identified them.

4.7.3 Protection from harm

Harm may include emotional or psychological distress, as well as physical harm (Babbie 2002: 62). As a researcher who is also an educator it was my concern to protect the learners who took part in this research. The main aim of this study was to ascertain the need of FET learners' for personal well-being and I did my utmost best to protect them for any emotional stress this discussion might generate.

4.7.4 Right to privacy

Given the highly personal nature of personal well-being, the right to privacy was very important. It also complements confidentiality (Babbie 2002: 62). Members of the group committed themselves to keep what transpired in the sessions between themselves and not to divulge any information to others who were not taking part.

4.8 SUMMARY

The research that was conducted lead to the emergence of participant learners' definition of the concept of personal well-being. The definition of the concept was influenced by their socio-economic and cultural societal context. I used qualitative research methods in my research design and methodology, which made it possible for me to unravel my research problem, namely the needs of adolescent learners' in the FET regarding their personal well-being.

My research had an exploratory nature. This type of research led to increased understanding of personal well-being. The result of my research was rich qualitative data that could be expressed in words, pictures, or other narrative forms such as, naïve sketches and collages. In order to successfully reach the aims of my research, I constructed a research design to find answers to the research questions that I had posed.

My research started with my observations that indicated that there was a need to conduct the planned research. My observations informed my research purpose and were based on learners' problems about their identity, self-image and self-concept.

I followed a qualitative approach that highlighted my involvement as I chose to use qualitative methods in the participants' natural setting. I applied the participatory action research method as I involved the participants actively to ascertain their own need for personal well-being. The participants were actively involved in focus groups through group work sessions. The group work sessions entailed three important phases, namely awareness, exploration and personalisation.

The data collection process included the use of focus groups during the group work sessions. The data that I collected from the naïve sketches that the participants completed during the awareness and personalisation phases of group work, as well as my observations and field notes, served as distinct measures of data collection.

I analysed the collected data by finding meaning in the recorded words, either by deductive and inductive ways. This made logical sense of the gathered data. I used thematic analysis in the group work sessions to explore words, concepts and non-verbal cues essential to capture feeling. My study met the requirements of reliability and validity and was conducted in an ethical manner. The presentation of my findings is reported in chapter five regarding the FET learners' need for personal well-being.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter dealt with the research design and methodology that was involved in the active participative fieldwork, using a qualitative research design.

In this chapter, I present the findings regarding the FET learners' needs for their personal well-being. The learners used the group work phases to explore and investigate the concept of personal well-being, as well as their own need for personal well-being. I discuss the empirical investigation in this chapter. The group work sessions included naïve sketches written by learner participants in the awareness and personalisation phases. Data gathered from three naïve sketches as well as the transcription of the focus group discussions, the observations and field notes were processed with the aim of addressing the posed research question: What are the FET learners' needs for their personal well-being? This chapter systematically reflects on the steps in the research process which includes the analysis of the data. In the end the results of analysed findings are discussed.

5.2 STEPS IN RESEARCH PROCESS

In the following section, attention is given to the sampling of selected learner participants for the research, the time and duration of the process as well as the role of the researcher as facilitator. I also discuss the analysis of the collected data which includes reduction and organisation.

5.2.1 Sampling of selected participants

As outlined in section 4.3, this research project utilised a small sample of participants, namely ten selected grade ten learners. The group constituted five boy and five girl learners. They represented cultural groups in the school, that is Tswana, Sesotho, Zulu, and Xhosa groups. In terms of age they fell in the category 15-18 years. Members from

the Grade 10 group volunteered to participate after I had explained to them what the project entailed. In the group formation session, learner participants introduced themselves in order to know each other better and they set the ground rules to regulate themselves (see Appendix C) as well as committing themselves to the group. Table 5.1 provides a systematic summary of the participants' background information captured in the first initial group formation session.

Table 5.1: Summary of participants' characteristics

Participants	Gender	Age	Family composition	Home language
Learner 1	Girl	15 years	Both parents	Zulu
Learner 2	Girl	16 years	Both parents	Sesotho
Learner 3	Boy	17 years	Both parents	Xhosa
Learner 4	Girl	16 years	Both parents	Zulu
Learner 5	Boy	16 years	Both parents	Sesotho
Learner 6	Girl	16 years	Both parents	Xhosa
Learner 7	Girl	18 years	Both parents	Sesotho
Learner 8	Boy	18 years	Both parents	Tswana
Learner 9	Boy	16 years	Both parents	Xhosa
Learner 10	Boy	18 years	Both parents	Tswana

5.2.2 Time and duration of the group work sessions

I held an initial group formation session with the selected learner participants. The meeting was aimed at group formation and identity wherein learners identified themselves as learners and as well as young people. During self-identification learner participants evaluated the self in relation to various aspects of the self (see table 5.1). This session lasted for forty-five minutes. The subsequent group work sessions comprised awareness, exploration and personalisation phases and lasted an hour respectively. All three sessions started at 10h30 until 11h30 each Wednesday for two consecutive weeks except the last session that was rescheduled for Tuesday because of examinations due to start on Thursday of the same week.

5.2.3 Continuous data collection

Raw data were gathered during the whole process. In the group formation session, learner participants introduced themselves and an 'icebreaker' was used to encourage them to put participants at ease. The icebreaker requirements were as follows: Each learner had to choose a letter from his/her name or surname and ascribe a positive quality to this letter during the introduction. Data were collected from these initial introductions of positive qualities of learner participants that were relevant to the concept of personal well-being (see Appendix B). In the awareness phase, the first naïve sketch was used as a method to collect data. The focus group discussion was transcribed as it formed the primary part of the data in the exploration phase (see Appendix I). The second and third naïve sketches (Appendix K) were used in the personalisation phase together with needs identified by learner participants (see Appendix J). Furthermore, the observations and field notes served as continuous raw data collection.

In the next section the analysis of the collected data are discussed.

5.2.4 Analysis of data

As the research project was aimed at exploration of the theme personal well-being, it took the route of exploratory research (see section 4.3). Ruane (2005: 11) noted that exploratory research produces qualitative data by making use of words, pictures and other narratives. In this research, the group work activities made it possible for learner participants in the four sessions of group work to verbalise what was felt. The raw data consisted of the first naïve sketch (awareness phase) (see Appendix H), recordings of the focus groups (exploration phase), second and third naïve sketches (personalisation phase) (see Appendix K) observations and field notes. The analysis of data is the process by which order, structure and meaning is gained from raw data. In the following sections, the three main phases of the analysis of the data are explained, namely the physical transcription of the gathered data, the coding of the transcribed data in order to reduce the volume of the material and finally, a thematic analysis which brought me to an understanding of the data.

The research report moved from raw data to meaningful understanding based on generation and exploration of relevant expressions to the theme of personal well-being (see section 4.5.4.3). Themes found in this study were identified in all the sessions of group work and were linked to words used and expressed by learner participants. Each of the needs identified by learner participants tend to feature in the light of the literature study and themes discussed.

5.2.4.1 Transcription

Transcription of data involved a written account of whatever I heard and observed during the four sessions of group work from group formation to the personalisation phase. Data that pertained to observations and expressions made by learners were captured as fieldwork notes which are recorded in Appendices (A-K) of the report. The appendices are recorded systematically as they progress from the initial stage to the last final session. The following are the recorded transcriptions:

- The first initial group formation session introductions by learner participants were recorded by the researcher on paper and later transcribed in Appendix B.
- The ground rules set were recorded on a flip chart, which was displayed in the following sessions. These ground rules were transcribed on paper after the session (see Appendix C).
- All the qualities that the learners identified or named as positive human qualities were recorded in Appendix D of the report.
- Based on Appendix E (facial expressions/feelings chart) learner participants marked faces and called out per row a face that typifies a happy satisfied face. Once more I recorded the chosen faces on paper and they were later noted in Appendix F.
- Pictures were torn from old 'True Love' magazines and on presentation of each picture by participants I recorded a brief explanation given about its nature with reference to the best reflection of happy contented people. What was recorded was transcribed in Appendix G.
- A transcription was made of the participants' summarised phrase of the theme of discussion: 'Expression of feeling and reaction when you know yourself better.'

- Learner participants responded to the first naïve sketch and the transcriptions were made in Appendix H.

- Transcriptions were made during the focus groups' report back that included the recording on paper and original scripts submitted by both groups. This was later transcribed to be included in Appendix I.

- Appendix J is a transcription of the listed needs identified by learner participants for personal well-being.

- The learner participants also wrote down their responses to the last two naïve sketches in the personalisation phase. This was later transcribed and included in Appendix K.

The next sub-section explains the coding process in this research.

5.2.4.2 Coding

The research methodology and design used in this project was qualitative, hence the coding procedure was also qualitative. Coding took place throughout this research project from the group formation session *(descriptive coding used to learner introductions)*, to the three phases of group work, to words expressed and themes found in the naïve sketches. The raw data was categorised according to dimensions of various aspects of well-being. Therefore, I applied *topic coding* where responses are linked to relevant aspects of well-being.

The coded data *(topic and analytical coding used)* revolved around three categories found in the awareness phase: human positive qualities, feelings depicted and pictures chosen that are interrelated in the definitions of aspects of personal well-being embedded in the four themes. These are general, subjective, psychological and social well-beings (see table 5.2 in section 5.3.2). Each category with its sub-categories from raw data are placed along side each other to show their relevance to each theme. A link is forged between sub-categories to clearly inform the expression of each theme (aspect) of personal well-being in the awareness phase.

The research project investigated the needs of the learner participants' well-being. This was partly done by analysing *(analytical coding)* their given responses in the personalisation phase (see section 5.2.4.1). The data reflected their needs and I analytically coded them. Their subjective self-evaluation of their own well-being could be either cognitive or affective. It was self-judgement with no right or wrong answers. The needs that were mentioned by participants resulted from introspective self-evaluation. I applied *analytical and topic coding* to the needs they expressed in the personalisation phase which was done by means of finding meaning for raw data in learner participants' responses (see Appendix J).

The next sections entail the discussion of the results that are based on the analysed data.

5.3 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The interpretation of raw data is done according to the sessions held in the group work, namely group formation that included introductions as well as the icebreaker and ground rules, the awareness phase which included three activities and a naïve sketch, followed by the exploration phase which was derived from the transcription of the focus group discussion. The second and third naïve sketches formed the core of personalisation in the third stage.

Lastly observations, including field notes, supplement the whole process in order for the reader to grasp the meaning and the contextual background of the participants.

5.3.1 Themes found in group formation

In the initial group formation, learner participants joined the group voluntarily as explained in section 4.5.2.1. They introduced themselves and set the ground rules to ensure group cohesion. The positive qualities that were expressed and the ground rules that they set (see Appendix B and C) tended to enhance their sense of well-being. These words pointed at positive human qualities, which they realised about themselves such as a potential of self-acceptance, which was identified as one dimension of personal well-being. Here follows the word qualities as given during the group work process

(see Appendix B) that were expressed by the participants thematically grouped into four categories. The categories are the following:

- *Personal time-management and self-control* category, the first quality is *'punctual'*. Punctuality is an important feature related to mental health, indicative of strategies used to deal with external pressures such as an action plan. Public institutions shape the experience of time, with the school system structuring the day of a learner (see section 2.3.3). The second quality is *'sexuality'* that directly falls under *self-control*. It is a positive human quality which is controlled and balanced. It is linked to background and agentic factors found in the model of well-being (see section 2.2.1.2). The background factors given were *gender* (includes sexuality) and *agentic* which refers to the individual's agency to act on inborn pressures by means of self-control.

- The next category is *moral values*. Moral values identify a *'fine person, respecting'* others. These qualities signify subjective well-being, social well-being and emotional vitality (see section 2.2.1, 2.4.1 and 3.2.1) based on the ability to do self-evaluation, to relate with others positively and result in enhanced personal well-being. Reference was also made to self-appraisal and social climate (see table 2.1). *'Liking'* (quality) of others and being *'helpful by means of advice'* (quality) means reaching out to others. This leads to a noted fulfilment which is found when a person is in touch with others. Giving advice, leads to mental health (see section 3.2.1), psychological and social well-being. Secondly, expressions such as *'faithful, trustworthy and honesty'* refer to positive human values identified in one's personal well-being involved in general subjective well-being. People are honest with themselves and others and actions are consistent with their feelings and thoughts (see section 2.3.3).

- The third category is the *affective/emotive* category that expresses *'love'* as an identified quality that falls under the rubric, overall general subjective well-being. Other positive qualities are *'trustworthy, honesty, friendly, kindness and sharing'* which pointed to general subjective well-being complemented by social well-being. Agentic factors and mental health are found in activities which they enjoyed, such as 'reading, cooking, cleaning and watching TV'. *'Love and respect'* those who do the same to him/her. The two qualities are twinned in the statement to bring out the

cognitive and affective state of well-being complementing each other. These could serve as actualisation of personal well-being.

- The fourth category expresses *personal attribute*s (qualities) of *'mature, calm and gentle'*. The learners identified a sense of well-balanced mental health correlated to high subjective well-being. These qualities express a range of feelings that describe overall general well-being, that is, the subjective state. *'Encouraging and patient'* are the identified positive qualities which are also future inclined, because one of the learner participants aimed to become an economist. Social subjective well-being, psychological well-being and a well-balanced mental health state are found in the positive qualities mentioned.

Themes found in ground rules

The ground rules set are loaded with qualitative expressions that are linked to subjective and social well-being (see section 5.2.4.1). The theme in the following set of rules is predominantly *social well-being*. This includes aspects that enhance experiences like time structure, collective effort and social contact:

- Gossiping forbidden, listening, trust, loyal commitment, team spirit and privacy/confidentiality are encouraged.

The next set of rules presents the following themes: *subjective and psychological well-being (*see section 2.2.2-2.3.1). The set of ground rules generated by the group, expressed what was felt when learner participants did a self-evaluation during the group formation stage. They all experienced some reservation whether they wanted to be part of the group or not:

- Trust; love one another, loyalty, offensive utterances not welcomed, help, support sought, and tolerance.

The ascribed qualities form three groups based on the number of occasions that each quality is mentioned. These groups are complemented by the expression of each learner's self-identity.

The groupings are as follows:

- 'Fine person, respecting'; 'faithful and honest'; 'trustworthy and honest'; 'love and respect'; 'matured, calm and gentle'.
- 'Liking of other persons and being helpful by means of advice'; 'encouraging and patient'; 'friendly, kindness and sharing'.
- 'Love' referred to three times as a positive identity quality.

The next section reports on themes found in the awareness phase.

5.3.2 Themes found in the awareness phase

In table 5.2, the themes are grouped together according to the sequential progression of activities in the phase because these themes became saturated during analysis. Sets of words were expressed in the first activity (see Appendix D) of the awareness stage in response to my query to establish what qualities make people feel special and happy. These words are more subjective and they express an overall general state of well-being:

- General subjective well-being found in these responses are: active, smile, joking, kindness, laughing, open expression and confidence.
- Talkative, friendly and approachable are an indication of social well-being.
- A sense of pride complemented by confidence and contentment which qualifies a positive state of mental health.

The group work awareness process led learners to observe people's positive human qualities. This activity was followed by an activity based on the facial/feelings chart wherein learners marked faces that depicted feelings of happiness and contentment in each row (see Appendix E). Each facial drawing was labelled with a feeling so that the learner could identify a face and a feeling expressed non-verbally on the chart. This activity led to the feeling category which is one component of personal well-being.

Table 5.2 below provides a schematic representation of the categorised criteria which were used in activities. It also reflects the identified themes that are aspects or dimensions of personal well-being. The responses that were recorded during the activities form sub-categories that are linked to aspects of personal well-being.

Table 5.2: Summary of identified themes, categories and sub-categories in the awareness stage

Category-Human qualities	Category-Feelings depiction (facial/feelings chart)	Category-Picture words expression
Theme 1: General well-being **Sub-categories (raw data)** Laughing, joking, open, talkative, dance, friendly, smile, kindness, confidence, pride, active friendly, approachable	**General well-being** **Sub-categories (raw data)** Blissful, joyful, happy, ecstatic, satisfied, satisfaction, excited, confident	**General well-being** **Sub-categories (raw data)** Happy & complete, dancing and smiling a sign of happiness & enjoyment. Excited, confident, smiling-fulfilled
Theme 2: Subjective well-being **Sub-categories:** Active, smile, joking, kindness, laughing, open expression and confidence	**Subjective well-being** **Sub-categories:** Blissful, ecstatic, happy, joyful & excited. Confident, love struck, optimistic, satisfied, peaceful, thankful and lucky.	**Subjective well-being** **Sub-categories:** Happy & complete, excited, confident, thankful, advertises-liked, clean and smart.
Theme 3: Psychological well-being **Sub-categories:** Open-expression, friendly, approachable, confidence and pride	**Psychological well-being** **Subcategories:** Confident, excited, optimistic, peaceful, satisfied, lucky	**Psychological well-being** **Sub-categories:** Happy complete family, sign of happiness & enjoyment, excited, quality time enjoyed in caring, happy with what one does, fulfilled
Theme 4: Social well-being **Sub-categories:** Open, talkative, friendly, approachable, talking to anyone, active, expression-open, joking, laughing	**Social well-being** **Sub-categories:** Happy, joyful, blissful, love struck, peaceful, thankful	**Social well-being** **Sub-categories:** Happy complete family, dancing and smiling people, excitement and united, quality time enjoyed, happy with one does (advertises), smiling-fulfilled

Table 5.2 summarises categories and sub-categories (raw data from responses of participants). Aspects (themes) of well-being are identified in all the three categories. This indicates that the raw data response sub-categories have similar linked elements found in the defining features of well-being. General overall well-being is made up of all aspects of well-being that are closely intertwined and interrelated. In reality it is

impossible to talk of one single aspect independently as they all form a holistic personal well-being; hence the sub-categories repeatedly appear in all the four themes. The aspects/themes are not segmented as they work in collaboration with each other; they complement each other and serve as protective layers of the central subjective well-being.

The last activity in the awareness phase involved the writing of a naïve sketches in response to the following question: What makes people feel good about themselves? Responses are recorded in Appendix H of the report. These are categorised below according to themes which are aspects of well-being:

- *Subjective well-being* found in the following responses: Conscious of who they are (what the individual feels and think about self); proud about of who they are; pass their examinations (goals reached) paid well (life satisfaction and contentment); people appreciate themselves (accepting self); feel good about being who they are. They do not pretend to be somebody (self-acceptance). They feel good about things they do and they care what people say about them. They like themselves.

- *Psychological well-being* found in the following responses: They know what they stand for; acknowledge that they are unique and no one is not unique; happy because of the work; they don't take other people for granted; they accept the way they are first, no matter how they appear and are proud of whom they are; they inspire themselves (features personal growth). The way he is doing something: to make you feel good about yourself, you can sing and you can play something that you want to do. They know what they want to do in future. They are valuable and they will feel that there is something they live for.

- *Social well-being* found in the following responses: They feel good about themselves when they care for one another. Things that they do, people around them and being with people who love you makes them feel good. They enjoy relationships.

- *Spiritual well-being* (described as a combination of religious well-being, which is defined as a person's relationship to God and existential well-being) found in the following responses: They know what they stand for and are respectful to other people. Love is very essential and it is needed in a human being. Respect is the key

to the door of human dignity. Love + respect + trust = being an extra-ordinary human being.

- *Mental health* is state of mind in which a person who is healthy is able to cope with and adjust to recurrent stresses of everyday living in an acceptable way. 'Health' is a positive state of physical, mental, social well-being. Complete health combines high levels of emotional, psychological and social well-being (see section 3.2.1). The recorded responses illustrate that people can combine and balance all aspects of well-being resulting in high subjective well-being and mental health. The following responses indicate an asserted mental health well being: They inspire and believe in themselves. To balance the physical aspect of well-being they play sport that boosts a low sense of personal well-being. Health is a positive state of physical, mental and social well-being. People with healthy mental well-being appreciate themselves.

The following section discusses themes found in the exploration phase.

5.3.3 Themes found in exploration

Both groups reported back (see Appendix I). The following categories were found in the analysed data. They are compiled from sub-categories and illustrated by direct quotes from the raw data. Themes that are highlighted were referred to in the previous phase. They are social well-being, general subjective well-being, mental health and psychological well-being.

1. The first category found in the responses is *social support/capital* where one cares for others and expects to both give/receive help and support when needed. The schooling community may serve as social support structure to enhance personal well-being. The following responses are direct raw data expressed by learner participants*: 'Give advice & respect, don't take other people for granted, take the person out to forget his/her, be supportive, being kind to the person and tell him it is okay to be angry.'*

2. *Self-motivation* (category) indicated by sub-categories like: *'Face life challenges, be strong, never give-up easily, never allow anyone to bring you down, believe in yourself.'* The learner participants realised that their ability to face life challenges and maintain essential strength propagates mental health (see section 3.2). General

subjective well-being is based on personal evaluations and result in a need to affirm self by believing in self.

3. *Self-acceptance* is found in the following sub-categories: *'Appreciate yourself and be proud of yourself, tell yourself that you are unique, love yourself and have self-esteem.'* Self-acceptance and accepting oneself is based on subjective and psychological well-being. Personal positive regard earmarks a healthy individual and is an aspect of psychological well-being.

Next section entails a discussion on the themes found in the personalisation stage.

5.3.4 Themes in personalisation phase

The personalisation phase afforded learner participants the opportunity to apply the theme of discussion to their own personal well-being. In order to do this, they responded to two questions with naïve sketches (responses see Appendix K):

1. How do you deal with your need for personal well-being?
2. How did you experience working on this group work research project?

The analysed responses are grouped according to facets of well-being, namely:
- General well-being
- Subjective well-being
- Psychological well-being
- Social well-being
- Mental health

All the mentioned aspects constitute the theme of this research study which is personal well-being. Responses to the first naïve sketch elicited responses that are linked to the first theme in personalisation phase. The above-mentioned aspects are closely linked with the theme in personalisation: *'Personal reflection on their own personal well-being'*. The second naïve sketch responses are also linked to the second theme in personalisation, namely *'Personal experience and meaning attributed'* discussed in sub-section 5.3.4.2.

The following sub-section presents the responses to the first naïve sketch.

5.3.4.1 Theme One: Personal reflection on their own personal well-being

<u>Analysed responses to first naïve sketch</u>

- *General well-being* is subjective and emotional; it is what the individual feels and thinks about him/herself. The responses that are related to the state above were already referred to in this category in the previous sessions. A newly found response is: 'Talk to a friend if faced with problem' (openness-general well-being).

- There are *subjective well-being* indicators used in chapter two. The responses relevant to them are placed under this category. Achieve your goals and schoolwork (achieve self-chosen goals), achieve my set goals, feels in need (personal evaluation), work hard to deal with needs (satisfaction of everyday needs).

- *Psychological well-being* based on the following features: Positive relation, self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life and personal growth. The responses closely related to these features are placed under this category as one of the facets of personal well-being. Don't side with other people (autonomy capable to make decisions independently), do right things (regulate behaviour from internal standards), need to improve yourself (desire and attempt to grow), improve on my weaknesses by focusing on things that give me hard time.

- There are experiences that contribute to high *social well-being.* Any relevant experiences found in the responses fall under this category. Socialising with other people (social contact, support and social capital).

- Responses found refer to faith and believe in yourself, do things that your heart tells you (spiritual moral value of conscience), do the right things, respect myself and each other, not giving up hope being faithful.

- *Mental health* state responses: Not to do the problem in the future, tell yourself that everything is possible believe in yourself never give up until need are met, need to improve, strength, being brave and work hard to deal with needs, letting no one to do you down and thinking the best of you, learn from previous mistakes and improve on weaknesses.

The next sub-section entails analysed responses of the second naïve sketch.

5.3.4.2 Theme two: Personal experience and meaning attributed

The responses to the second theme in the personalisation phase are presented in table 5.3. In the analysed responses of the naïve sketch written in response to the question: *How did you experience working on this group work research project?* Direct quotes were grouped according to the two worded phrases/concepts derived from the theme.

The first group expresses learner participants' *experiences* of the group work activity in which they participated in the investigation of the concept personal well-being. The second group category revolves around the meaning given *(attributed)* by learner participants to enhanced personal well-being.

These categories broadly reflect features of the aspects of well-being discussed in the literature review in chapter two and three. The first category *(experience)* largely indicates the state of general well-being and the overall subjective state which involves a range of feelings from happiness and love to confidence. *Meaning attribution* category expresses personal well-being dimensions/aspects found in literature reviewed (chapters 2 and 3 sections 2.2, 2.2.1, 2.3, 2.4 and 3.2.1) dealing with *subjective, social and psychological well-beings & mental health.*

Table 5.3: Analysed responses to second naïve sketch

CATEGORY: *Personal Experience Responses*	*CATEGORY:* *Meaning Attribution Responses*
Believe in myself	*Listened to not teased!*
Nice and enjoyed	*New things generated*
Felt confident	*Respect learned, honesty and faithful*
Happy because I learned	*Learned how to reach dreams and goals, how one and others are special*
Felt good about the educator	*Knowledge gained*
Felt happy, experienced many things	*Honoured*
Great opportunity to relate with classmates	*Learned for self-knowledge*

Enjoyed	*Grateful for the opportunity*
Would love to work with the researcher	*Advised to follow good way*
Feels like a good learner	*Understanding basics of life*
Happy, very good listener and I gained	*Pride*
Totally good experience working together, learning new things	

Table 5.3 shows learner participants' reflection of their experiences and values ascribed to what they felt contributed to their high sense of personal well-being.

The next section explains observations made and field notes kept.

5.3.5 Observations and field notes

The researcher took notes throughout her observations. These notes are now discussed:

- **Observations noted:** The researcher observed that learner participants were very cooperative and eager to do activities. At the group formation session some were smiling broadly, showing a friendly positive attitude that made it easier for them to open up to the researcher and their fellow classmates.
- **Methodological notes:** The first two sessions for awareness and exploration took place as scheduled, that is, on Wednesdays which was the first day of the initial group formation. The personalisation session had to be rescheduled for the next Tuesday because the learner participants were starting with half-yearly examinations the following Thursday. The researcher experienced technical problems with the audiocassette recorder that did not record the first two sessions. However, the researcher recorded everything said in her field notes.
- **Personal notes:** The researcher made notes of: Learner introductions (see section 5.2.4.1), ground rules set noted on a flip chart displayed at all sessions (see Appendix C), human qualities on a flip chart transferred to personal notes used for report and analysis. All responses during the three phases were recorded except the

naïve sketches that were written by learner participants. They were recorded in the transcription in section 5.2.4.1.

- **Theoretical notes:** As these notes involve background literature, they are discussed in section 5.4.

In the next section the role of the researcher is addressed.

5.4 Role of the researcher in the group work sessions

The researcher acts as a facilitator and a coordinator of the sessions. She steered the discussions, listened actively and probed some responses to clarify the issues raised. The researcher was also involved in planning all the activities that took place. The researcher assured the learner participants of confidentiality and privacy regarding their involvement in the study.

The next section establishes the relationship between the information that was found in the literature and the finding of the empirical research.

5.5 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LITERATURE AND EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

In chapters two and three the concept of personal well-being was presented based on literature reviewed. Table 5.4 lists aspects of well-being as they are found in the literature and links them to the learners' findings during the group work sessions.

Table 5.4: Aspects of personal well-being from literature linked to group work sessions

Aspects/needs of personal well-being identified in group work sessions	Link with	Aspects of personal well-being found in literature studied
-Happiness after promotion and feel good -Play sport	⟺	**Personal/individual well-being**-Promotion of ability of children and adults to pursue chosen goals in life. **-**Protection of physical and emotional health
-Respect, loyal, honoured, self-acceptance, love yourself, trustworthy, faith and hope, achieve goals, action or energy and peace of mind	⟺	**Needs:** mastery, control, self-efficacy, choice skills, growth, self-appraisals, autonomy, self-esteem, life satisfaction
-Face life challenges and be strong never give up easily	⟺	**Values:** Self-determination and personal growth
-Ground rules set: Gossiping forbidden, listening, privacy/confidentiality -Love one another, offensive utterances not welcomed, help, support sought	⟺	**Relational well-being-**promotion of fair processes whereby children and adults can have meaningful input into decisions affecting their lives
-**Introductions/identification-positive qualities**: Punctual, respectful, faithful, fine person, matured, encouraging and patient, Economist	⟺	**Needs:** identity, dignity, self-respect, acceptance, participation, involvement, and mutual responsibility
-Team spirit encouraged, tolerate each other, not to take others for granted	⟺	**Values:** Respect for human diversity, collaboration and democratic participation
-Calm, gentle, achieve goals, respecting self and others, dancing, singing, optimistic -Advertising, promotion, pass exams	⟺	**Objective well-being**-personal qualities, wisdom, stability, creativeness, morality Need gratification, self-actualisation
-Trust, socialising with other people, loyal commitment	⟺	**Collective well-being**- social (opinion) climate, acceptance, mutual trust, group morale

Learner participants were able to pinpoint aspects that are essential to reach a sense of personal/individual well-being. According to the literature sources this is through the promotion of the ability to reach set goals *(manifested by success and work promotion as well as sports recreation)*. Learner participants' needs matched the needs outlined in the literature regarding self-esteem *(respect-honour)* and life satisfaction and choice skills equivalent to *achieve goals*.

5.6 SUMMARY

In this chapter the empirical investigation was discussed. I explained my data collection process, the use of the specified methods and the data analysis. The results from the analysed raw data were summarised and interpreted. Different themes and categories were identified from each session of group work and these were related to the literature research that was done in chapter 2 and 3. Aspects of well-being were identified throughout all the contact sessions, namely from the group formation session to the three group work phases of awareness, exploration and personalisation.

In the group formation session I found that learner participants identified themselves by the use of positive qualities. I also found that they preferred a warm peaceful group atmosphere, hence positive ground rules set.

The three phases of group work rendered the following insights regarding the need of FET learners for personal well-being. In the awareness session, participants emphasised a positive sense of well-being. This they identified in others and they confirmed the positive sense of well-being by the pictures they chose. In the exploration phase learner participants acknowledged a need for personal well-being. They discussed and presented the essential aspects of personal well-being. Aspects identified were referred to as 'needs' and they were linked to relevant aspects found in literature reviewed in chapters two and three. In the personalisation phase, they highlighted and verbalised their needs for personal well-being. They presented naïve sketches which expressed their personal reflection, experience and meaning attributed to the whole group work research project.

I applied descriptive, topic and analytical forms of coding to the responses (raw data collected) in order to link them to the theme of this research project. This put them into context of the noted aspects of well-being.

Finally, I discussed my observation and fieldwork notes. The role that I played was explained as well as the relationship between literature and empirical research.

Chapter six contains a summary of the research and the main conclusions as well as limitations and recommendations regarding the research.

CHAPTER SIX

OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This study was done within a specific context, thus limiting the generalisability of research findings. However, the study gives an in-depth insight into the concept personal well-being as experienced and perceived by ten FET grade learners. Based on my findings and observations I argue that the Department of Education, supporting structures like the family as well as other sector departments need to work in partnership to promote health and well-being in learners.

This last chapter serves as a conclusion of the research. To conclude, a summary of the study and findings are presented, based on what was found in the literature reviewed and the empirical investigation. A link between findings and literature survey with empirical investigation is made. Research questions posed in chapter one (see section 1.3) are reviewed to ascertain whether they were addressed through the research process.

Finally, interpretations based on findings and recommendations are presented. Conclusions and recommendations are finalised in this concluding chapter. Limitations identified during the course of study are noted and discussed.

The next section provides a summary of the study and findings made.

6.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the study was to gain more insight into the personal state of well-being. In order to be focused the study and investigation of this concept was limited to FET learners due to the fact that 'personal well-being' is a learning outcome in this education band. The study was aimed at establishing the needs of FET learners for their personal well-being. To fulfil the purpose it was essential to do a literature review which brought me up to date with the topic of my research; secondly, an empirical

research was conducted to investigate the identified aspects of well-being with learner participants.

The following section explains findings and conclusions based on the literature reviewed.

6.2.1 Summary, findings and conclusions emanating from literature survey

A literature study was done in chapters two and three to explore various aspects including concepts related to personal well-being. In this study I focused on definitions of aspects of well-being, general, subjective, psychological, social, spiritual well-being and mental health which reflect crucial facets of a balanced healthy well-being. Theories, perspectives, dynamic principles as well as a model of personal well-being and mental health in local and international context were explored. The information gained from the literature was used to verify the findings of the research study. The literature reviewed named five aspects of personal well-being which are summarised in the next sub-sections. Aspects of personal well-being are as follows:

6.2.1.1 Subjective well-being

This refers to people's evaluations of their lives. These evaluations can be cognitive that is thinking about one's life; judgements of life satisfaction or affective factors, that is, feelings of elation or lack of depression. People are said to have high subjective well-being if they feel satisfied with conditions of their lives and experience frequent positive emotions. Indicators relevant for subjective well-being are:
- achieving self-chosen and authority-imposed goals
- attaining socially defined values
- being on the way to attain goals
- adapting to one's (social) environment
- satisfaction of everyday needs
- successful handling of goals
- participating in interesting activities
- positive evaluation of daily events

- meaningful use of time
- good health
- accepting oneself (Alsaker & Flammer 1999: 117).

6.2.1.2 Psychological well-being

This aspect of well-being is based on the following features:

- *Positive relations* with others, maintaining positive regard for others, as well as oneself earmark the healthy individual.

- *Self-acceptance* is a criterion of wellness that says healthy people hold positive attitudes toward themselves.

- *Autonomy* is the counterpart to submissiveness and blind obedience to other people and society. Healthy people are capable of, and comfortable with, making decisions independently and regulating their behaviour from internal standards.

- *Environmental mastery* allows people to engage with and shape their environment to reflect their needs and their personality. Healthy people can choose or create environments compatible with their physical and psychological needs.

- *Purpose in life* incorporates the criterion that healthy people possess goals, intentions, and a sense of direction, from which they feel that their lives are meaningful.

- *Personal growth* entails feelings of, and striving toward, exploration and development. Desire and attempt to grow characterise self-actualisers (see section 2.3.1).

6.2.1.3 Social well-being

This aspect is defined as the "relationships between people which enhance rather than damage, the well-being of the individual" (Buchanan & Hudson 2000: 31). Experiences contributing to high social well-being are the following:

- Time structure
- Social contact
- Collective effort or purpose
- Social identity/status and regular activity.

6.2.1.4 Spiritual well-being

This facet of well-being is described as a combination of religious well-being, which is defined as a person's relationship to God, and existential well-being, which is defined as a person's relationship to the world and includes a sense of meaning, satisfaction and purpose in life. Religious and existential well-beings are integral to a person's perception of the quality of life.

6.2.1.5 Mental health

Mental health is taken as a relative state of mind in which a person who is healthy is able to cope with and adjust to recurrent stresses of everyday living in an acceptable way. 'Health' is a positive state of physical, mental, social well-being. Mental well-being is part of health and cannot be separated from it. Complete mental health combines high levels of emotional, psychological and social well-being (see section 3.2).

The following section discusses findings and conclusions based on the empirical investigation.

6.2.2 Summary, findings and conclusions derived from empirical investigation

A description of qualitative participative research design was undertaken in chapter four. The research method, which included the data collection process, was outlined. The data for this study were collected from the FET learners' evaluation of activities of the group work phases. Data were found mainly in the naïve sketches written by learner participants in this study. The data collected from the practical fieldwork were coded and analysed in chapter five. The results of the study were also discussed.

The research showed that it is possible to use group work as a method to facilitate educative learning and teaching. This was a beneficial exercise because it improved participants' ways to cope with various life challenges affecting personal well-being and development. The group work activities allowed learners to express what was felt

and thought. The outcome of whole activity culminated in ownership of skills to deal with and enhance personal well-being.

The research design used in this study was strongly qualitative as it placed emphasis on social world (see section 4.4.1), which impacted on learner participants' interpretation and meaning attributed to the concept of personal well-being. Data were generated by focus groups and group work activities which were flexible enough to allow learners to express themselves and their needs for personal well-being freely. This qualitative approach made it possible for the researcher and the learner participants as co-researchers to understand the complexity, detail and context of the sense of personal well-being reflected in Appendices H, I and K of the report. A high level of communication was found in my involvement with learner participants (see section 4.4.1.1). Intense reflections were observed when learners reflected on the feelings chart, pictures and naïve sketches. This was only possible due to the real life setting where these activities unfolded.

According to Silverman (in Payne & Payne 2004: 175) qualitative methods deal with how people observe and describe their lives. In this study, learner participants were offered a chance through the group work activities during which they were guided and steered, to reflect on their needs for personal well-being. They explored in detail a few instances (see section 4.4.1.3) that applied to three different phases of group work. The study was discovery-oriented as group work led to the participants' own discovery of their needs and feelings about personal well-being.

Qualitative methods seek out and interpret the meaning that people bring to their actions. This applied in this study because learner participants played the role of co-researchers who also provided meaning to what they felt about the theme personal well-being.

Data collection took place throughout the activities that were planned for the participants in focus groups during the group work sessions wherein they concentrated on the shared meaning of personal well-being. The issues relating to personal well-being were introduced to participants in a predetermined order by me. The statements which I made in the phases of group work and the open-ended questions and topics

were carefully worded. The participants' responses were either expressed verbally or written in the form of naïve sketches. Discussions also took place during the group work sessions, especially in the exploration phase where participants shared their understanding of various aspects of personal well-being. As part of a focus group, participants were encouraged to consider how they feel about issues in the light of other people's feelings. Focus groups (see section 4.3.3.1) were informal, yet structured based on scheduled steps and posed statements. The group work process was not a formal classroom situation. The planned group work activities were very informal although structured according to set objectives for each session (see Appendix A). The focus groups promoted social interaction between group members that led to an insightful exchange of information and group members learned to know each other better. A focus group is part of the change process, for example, it is a way of getting learners to define what they want to happen. Based on this statement by Gomm (2004), participants identified their needs for personal well-being and expressed how they want to deal with their need for personal well-being as expressed in naïve sketches (personalisation phase).

My findings and conclusions are based on the qualitative research methods that made it possible for me and my co-researchers (participants) to investigate the concept personal well-being. I worked with the participants in a relaxed informal situation which was conducive to their free expression and communication of the significance, experience and meaning which they attributed to their personal well-being.

The next section discusses the findings of the practical research in relation to research questions posed.

6.3 FINDINGS RELATED TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The sub-questions that I posed underpinned the main question. The main question was: What are the FET learners' needs for their personal well-being? This question was partially answered during the exploration phase of group work when learners identified aspects of personal well-being which they felt were needed for personal well-being (see the first sub-question). Learner participants presented their perceived needs for personal well-being in the focus group discussion. They listed the following aspects that are

required to achieve a feeling of well-being: Appreciate and be proud of yourself, tell yourself you are unique, love yourself, believe in yourself, have self-esteem, face life challenges and maintain healthy behaviour (see Appendix I).

Learner participants did not directly tackle the second sub-question on common problems (see second sub-question). They made mention of a need to deal with anger (an internal problem), self-acceptance, self-esteem and a need to uphold their uniqueness (all from within). Not much is said about external problems like peer pressure (social problems) as well as environmental problems like drugs, crime and violence, which supported the literature that personal well-being is an internal state, less dependent on external circumstances than I thought. Learner participants did not mention mental health problems that may lead to impairment in everyday life experiences hence the sub-question is not directly answered.

Learner participants were able to ascertain their needs toward personal well-being because in the personalisation phase they actually listed their needs for personal well-being. These needs (see Appendix J) served as a further supporting answer to the main question. Learner participant expressed a need for respect, honour, loyalty, confidence, self-acceptance, being loved, being strong, believe in yourself and achieve goals. Lastly they need satisfaction, happiness and peace of mind.

The following section deals with my interpretation from the insights gained in the literature review and the empirical investigation.

6.4 INTERPRETATION

My interpretation is a reflection of what I fathomed and understood from this research project. I started with a literature survey, used the planned research fieldwork activities to collect data and ended with a data set that I analysed and interpreted. The concept investigated is subjective and personal. It would have been difficult to measure it quantitatively. Therefore, qualitative methods were chosen for data collection, analysis as well as coding and this made it possible to address this complex topic. Literature reviewed was presented by a number of sources that were complementary in the clarification of the concept of this study. Links between the findings and the literature

reviewed were forged in order to clarify the sense and understanding of the topic for the reader. Although participants could not use exact words used in literature, their comments were strongly related to the literature which indicated that their perception of personal well-being was not far-fetched. Thus, I can state that during the phases of group work, the learner participants as my co-researchers, identified aspects of well-being as found in the literature. They communicated their needs for personal well-being as elucidated in literature study.

Intense reflections took place that allowed participants to discover their own idea of personal well-being based on their thoughts and feelings. Reflections were possible due to the qualitative approach of the group work phases of awareness, exploration and personalisation. Ownership was promoted by allowing participants to consider how they would deal with their need of personal well-being. Participants presented their needs as well as ways to meet those needs. The focus groups promoted social interaction between group members that led to insightful exchange of information regarding social well-being.

Words verbalised, ground rules set, positive human qualities, word pictures and naïve sketches all rendered rich qualitative data. Each form of data mentioned emphasised all the aspects of well-being that constitute *general well-being*. This was described as an overall, subjective state which is present when a range of feelings, such as, energy, confidence, openness, enjoyment, happiness, calm and caring, are combined and balanced.

The following section deals with the recommendations that I make to address the identified needs for personal well-being of FET learners.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

My research was limited as per requirements of part-fulfilment of my course of study. My fieldwork was limited in space and time as I worked with only ten FET learners. Therefore, my findings cannot be generalised. Although I make recommendations, a similar study should be repeated before any concrete action is taken.

It is evident from the results of this study that learners acknowledge the importance of well-being and realise their own need for it. It is therefore useful to give recommendations that can be implemented to empower educators with coping strategies that are based on my literature study and results of my qualitative research.

I agree with Breggin (in Seedhouse 2202: 110) that educators need the support of parents and health workers. These adults need to be well informed about the problems associated with adolescence to avoid labelling. It is essential to relate to adolescent learners to understand their needs and establish coping strategies.

The following recommendations are made regarding learners who need to reach and maintain their personal well-being.

6.5.1 Policy implementation

Cowen (in Van Niekerk & Prins 2001) concluded that government policy can influence the behaviour and attitude of citizens. A vision of wellness and prevention may promote psychological well-being. Thus policies governing schools, for example, can be put into place to advance psychological well-being in youth. Furthermore, the bio-psychosocial/spiritual model (see section 2.4) could lend itself to evaluating groups of youths in regard to their level of psychological well-being. This could lead to the implementation of appropriate intervention programmes that could enhance substantially the chances of FET learners playing socially constructive roles in society. One way to address poorly balanced well-being is through psycho-education and life skills workshops within the education system. The education system may then serve as a vehicle to promote psychological well-being (Van Niekerk & Prins 2001: 41).

As a district official (Gauteng Department of Education), I fully support the above recommendation. We need to emphasise personal well-being in the policy that is followed. For instance, LO as a learning area needs to be facilitated and taught so that learners can reach the stipulated outcomes. The NCS principles (Grades 10-12) which are relevant to personal well-being need to be considered in every lesson that is planned and presented. The two most relevant principles for this study are: *Social transformation and human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice*. Based

on the principles above, learners may not be discriminated against but should be included. Therefore, their human rights are respected and as a result they are not disadvantaged which ensures that justice prevails contributing to their high sense of well-being.

The Departments of Education and Health in Gauteng Province have initiated to work in collaboration with LO educators with regard to health promotion. The LO curriculum includes Health and Well-being as two separate learning outcomes. Health promotion is outcome one (1) in grades R-9 of the GET Band whereas Personal well-being is outcome (1) in the FET in learning area LO. The Department of Health supports these outcomes through school nurses who assess, refer and guide learners towards personal growth and well-being.

I fully support that the integrative approach between intersectoral government departments should be well established and function to support anyone whose sense of personal well-being is low.

6.5.2 Value of school guidance in Life Orientation

This recommendation refers to the identified importance of school guidance in LO as explained by Kruger and Adams (2002). School guidance as one of the focus areas of LO aims to keep the total development of the learner in mind. The NCS has integrated Guidance into LO. LO supports the holistic development of the learner and has a role in addressing the social, personal, academic and economic problems reflected in school environment. School guidance in LO serves as a helping process which enhances personal well-being in the following ways:

- Encourages individuals to discover, release and develop potentials;
- Is planned by the teacher with specific developmental goals in mind;
- Encourages learners to take responsibility for their own lives.

There are five major aspects of guidance that can enhance personal well-being in LO:
1. Guidance's relevance to all aspects of learner's life.
2. Guidance in LO needs to take into account the developmental level and context of the learner.

3. School guidance helps learners become more self-aware.
4. Guidance/LO is relevant and meaningful to learners' life experiences.
5. School guidance requires the teacher to assume the role of facilitator of learning (Kruger & Adams 2002: 264-268).

I recommend that learners be guided towards personal well-being through lesson activities (like group work) facilitated in LO focused on Guidance. The group work that was utilised in the study is not familiar to both learners and educators (facilitators). As a result development and support regarding this skill is essential.

6.5.3 Use of life skills approach

The need to keep the whole person (physical, social and psychological) in mind during an LO/Guidance lesson has been emphasised by Kruger and Adams (2002). A useful format for the design of guidance activities, which also provides for the holistic consideration of the person, is the life skills approach (Kruger & Adams 2002: 269).

According to Van Niekerk and Prins (2001), to promote effective learning of life skills amongst South African learners, the Department of Education's *Interim Core Syllabus* for Guidance recommends the following ways of facilitating a suitable teaching-learning environment through:

- Optimal participation of learners
- Experimental use of learners' experiences
- Learner-centred teaching and learning guided by learners' needs
- Creative and free expressions & openness to alternative ideas
- Co-operative learning and encouragement of mutual feedback
- Sharing of ideas, e.g. by role-playing or group discussions
- Being non-judgemental, but putting both the pros and cons of issues raised
- Involving parents and the community (Van Niekerk & Prins 2001: 248-249).

I think it is favourable to empower learners with skills for life that elevate their personal well-being through open voluntary participation in group work activities. Learners are facilitated in life skills activities placing their experiences at the fore as they move from

known (shared experiences) to the unknown of developing aspects of personal well-being.

6.5.4 Building relationships means of learner support

Meyer, Mabaso and Lancaster (2001) recommend that learner support needs to be provided in order to enhance a sense of personal well-being in learners. When providing learner support, the relationship between the educator/facilitator and learners needs to be optimised to facilitate the learning process. It is through effective relationships that the educator is able to ensure that the learner has the best chance of gaining from the learning opportunity or the learning process. Furthermore, learners need to be understood and appreciated in order to provide the necessary learner support. Learner support takes place in the whole learning environment; in other words the contact the learner gets from school/education department before and after teaching-learning can also be regarded as learner support (Meyer et al 2001: 186).

Lemmer (in Meyer et al 2001) reports that learners prefer educator facilitators who are:
- warm and friendly
- respect them as individuals, their feelings, their personal lives and diverse culture
- avoid embarrassing learners and create a safe learning environment
- give structure in the learning process so that expectations are clear
- provide assistance beyond the typical learning situation
- treat learners fairly and give encouragement, recognition and praise for effort and success
- create variety in the learning process to accommodate different preferences for learning and that present challenges to the learners
- demonstrate own commitment to learning (Meyer et al 2001: 186).

Lemmer (in Meyer et al 2001: 187-189) suggests the following to enhance relationships while supporting learners:
- knowing the learners
- sharing attention evenly
- setting clear boundaries

- creating a safe and non-threatening learning environment

- using effective communication

- communicating high expectations

- interacting with learners.

I feel that relationships serve as social support structures for the development of innermost personal well-being. This means social relations help adolescent learners to be more focused and secure, attributes which contribute to their high sense of personal well-being.

6.5.5 Models of comprehensive health care

School-based mental health services hold promise for reaching youths in need. According to Lynn, McKay-McKernan and Atkins (2003), a mediational model for school-based mental health services can be linked to factors in the school environment and to children's mental health and academic achievement. School influences are mediated by the educators' role in promoting mental wellness among students. Collaboration with educators is the centrepiece for change at school, classroom and individual teacher levels. A mental health services delivery model that incorporates school social workers as resources to educators, families, and children is discussed as an approach to promote and expand prevention, identification, and treatment of children's emotional and behavioural difficulties in school settings (Lynn et al 2003: 197).

In the past decade, professionals from various disciplines (e.g. education, psychology, medicine, public health) have recognised the need for an integrated service delivery to address the health, mental health, educational and social service needs of youth. Models for school or community-based comprehensive health and mental health care for children and adolescents have been proposed. Common among these models are key components as recommended by Nastasi (2000: 541):

- Integration of educational, health or mental health, and social services within and across agencies and professional disciplines;

- Attention to the various ecological contexts that influence children and adolescents, including school, family, peer group, and community;

- Services that are individually, developmentally and culturally appropriate;

- A continuum of services ranging from prevention to treatment;

- Systematic evaluation of program process and outcome; and

- Provision of care based upon empirical evidence of the complexity of factors that influence the well-being of children and adolescents and their families.

Bartko and Eccles (2003) recommend "adolescent participation in structured and unstructured activities". In their article reference is made to eight features of developmental contexts that research and evaluation efforts have shown are linked to positive youth development. These included:

- Safe and health-promoting facilities;

- Clear, consistent rules and expectations;

- Warm, supportive relationships;

- Opportunities for meaningful inclusion and belonging;

- Positive social norms;

- Support for efficacy and autonomy;

- Opportunities for skill building; and

- Coordination among family, school, and community efforts.
  Activity settings characterised by high levels of these eight features are likely to provide the opportunity for adolescents' to build skills, form close relationships with peers and adults, and make meaningful contributions to their communities. Policy-makers, school districts, and communities can best serve the needs of their young people by providing safe, structured, and inclusive settings that focus on a broad range of developmental needs (Bartko & Eccles 2003: 240).

The recommendations outlined need all the stakeholders to work together toward balanced subjective well-being and mental health. It is imperative to involve parents and educators through community support structures, which can develop them further in partnership.

I think care and support, as well as inclusive atmosphere need to prevail in all circumstances for an enhanced well-being in all societal structures from family and the schooling community to the society at large.

The following section presents the conclusion of this research report.

6.6 MAIN CONCLUSION OF THE RESEARCH

It is clear from the study that FET learners acknowledge the need for a balanced inner well-being. It is therefore essential for all support structures to nurture and instil a sense of value for this important personal trait made up of strong personal attributes that can lift a weakened ego to reach a reasonable sense of general well-being.

To satisfy the needs in all the levels of the education system starting from the informal family situation to the schooling community in a classroom, the LO curriculum policy has to be implemented accurately and efficiently. The personal well-being needs identified are well-placed in the learning area LO that encompasses school guidance and life skills in its implementation. Strong bonding and social interaction serve to relay the focus of learning and teaching objectives in the form of a set learning outcome whether it is 'personal well-being', 'health promotion' or 'personal development' in the lower grades.

The process of policy implementation is needed to drive educative teaching and learning that enhances personal well-being in a progressive and consistent manner. Measures of attaining learning outcomes such as 'personal well-being' should be continuous between the GET and FET bands.

6.6.1 Limitations of the study

This exploratory study was applied to a small sample of FET grade ten participants. As a result it illustrated the feelings and perceptions of a small group of FET learners regarding their need for personal well-being. Most FET learners are not given a similar opportunity to be actively involved in an in-depth exploration of this personal aspect of their lives nor the internalisation process of the insight which they gained. If the group

work that was utilised is not used properly by educators/facilitators; they might be hesitant to explore its use further.

The study is based on learning area LO/Guidance that is not always allocated quality time in the timetable especially in the FET phase. The curriculum transformation from Guidance as non-examinable subject in the old dispensation to NCS LO (learning area) has not afforded it the deserved preferential status to attain personal well-being. Due to this unfavourable situation, most learners in FET classrooms may not reach the set outcomes.

6.7 FINAL COMMENT

Sense of personal well-being is about the 'mind, body and soul', which cannot be purchased. It refers to inborn inherent features for each person. Each of our learners is in possession of these treasured features. It is imperative to nurture them if they have a need for personal well-being. The mind should entertain positive thoughts (*Mental health well-being),* the physical body should be free of ailments (P*hysical overall general well-being)* and the soul should experience peace and freedom (S*piritual well-being).*

Personal well-being is essential for a balanced functioning person. It is most important to personal growth that includes the emotional strength to face life's challenges.

Personal well-being embraces life skills ability, healthy social support and social relations. It is important to balance all the aspects of personal well-being, starting from general subjective well-being to the resilient state of high subjective well-being.

APPENDIXES

- **Appendix A   Group Work Plan**

- **Appendix B   Learner Introductions/Positive Qualities**

- **Appendix C   Ground Rules**

- **Appendix D   Positive Human Qualities**

- **Appendix E   Facial/Feelings Chart**

- **Appendix F   Facial/Feelings Marked**

- **Appendix G   Pictures Chosen**

- **Appendix H   Naïve Sketches (Awareness Phase)**

- **Appendix I   Focus Group Discussion Report-Back (Exploration Phase)**

- **Appendix J   Identified Needs for Personal Well-being (Personalisation Phase)**

- **Appendix K   Naïve Sketches (Personalisation Phase)**

APPENDIX A

Group Work

Plan

SESSION ONE

ACTIVITIES	OBJECTIVES
• Introductions **-** I introduced myself as an educator based at the District office that does learner support and intervention. My role as a researcher was highlighted and learner participants partake by being co-researchers. **-**Learners were afforded opportunity to introduce themselves **-**Icebreaker: Learners selected one letter from their names and formulated a positive personal quality e.g. 'L' for loyal, loving. • Set ground rules -Learners set these rules and the researcher clarified them with some additions made. • Group identity -Group named –Peace United. -Symbol a 'dove' that signify peace.	• Promote positive atmosphere of acceptance and belongingness. • To establish rapport between the researcher and learner participants. • To commit to the group dynamics. • Abide to the rules. • Promote ownership. • Seal the group with honesty and trust.
SESSION TWO **Awareness in the first stage** • Identify qualities found in people that make them feel special and happy. • Facial/feelings chart -Learners marked what pictures showed happy and content faces. • Magazine picture pages-Reflection route. -Learners chose pictures from magazines, which reflected people who were happy and content.	• Ability to identify human qualities that makes one feel special and happy. • Ability to identify particular positive satisfying qualities. • Raise awareness on affective and mental state of being. • Learn and appreciate good sense of

• Summation -Learners give a word or phrase that name/summarised the theme of discussion noted on the flip chart. • Naïve sketches	personal well-being. • What makes people feel good about themselves?
SESSION THREE **Exploration in the second stage** • Collation of accumulated facts and formulated opinions made of the theme personal well-being. • Smaller group discussions on identified aspects. • Report back to larger group of discussed aspects. • Background information shared by the researcher about the concept	• Group in-puts in definition of personal well-being. • Gain insight on various aspects of personal well-being. • Intense exploration. • Collate the information to form holistic picture of personal well-being
SESSION FOUR **Personalisation in the third stage** • Learners apply the insight gained from previous two sessions. -Learners link identified aspects of personal well-being to own situation. • Naïve sketches	• Application and personalisation of insight gained. • How do you deal with your need for personal well-being? • How did you experience working on this group work research project?

Learner Introductions/Positive Qualities

Positive aspects are as follows:

Learner 1:

Name start with letter 'P' and positive human quality ascribed to it is 'punctual'. The learner smiling broadly refers to self as a fine person, respecting others also respects mother.

Learner 2:

Letter 'R' respectful like to be respected and 'f' 'faithful' and honest people liked.

Learner 3:

Used letter 'S' ascribed to 'sexuality' and in addition is an honest and friendly person.

Learner 4:

Positive quality likes other people, likes to advice others and likes to be respected.

Learner 5:

Letter 'L' 'love' people who love him.

Learner 6:

Learner identified following positive qualities 'trustworthy', 'honest', friendly, kind and 'loving' likes to share.

Learner 7:

Used letter 'L' ascribed quality of 'love' learner's real name in Sesotho means 'love'. Love people also like to joke with people. Referred to letter 's' for 'shy' but a kind person. Likes cooking, cleaning, watch TV and likes to read magazines.

Learner 8:

Letters 'L and R' love and respect those who love him. Does Commerce in grade 10 FET.

Learner 9:

Chose letter 'M' for a 'matured' calm gentle person.

Learner 10:

Letters 'E and P' encouraging and patience. Would like to become an Economist.

APPENDIX C

Ground Rules

- No gossiping

- Love one another

- Listen to other people's opinions

- Trust one another

- Be loyal-be committed to the group

- Team spirit encouraged

- Keep what was discussed between us

- Privacy and confidentiality must be maintained

- Acts and utterances should not be offensive and should not mean any harm to members

- Help and support each other

- Tolerate each other

Learner participants voted for a group name i.e. **Peace United.**

APPENDIX D

Positive Human Qualities

All what the learners identified or named as a human qualities were recorded on a flip chart. Leaner participants offered the following responses:

- Smile
- Joking
- Active
- Kindness
- Laughing
- Expression-open
- Talkative
- Confidence
- Pride
- Friendly
- Approachable
- Talking to anyone

Open Communication

The feeling check

Mark a face showing pleasure, contentment or satisfaction → "Happy and content face!"

Aggressive	Agonised	Anxious	Apologetic	Arrogant	Bashful	Blissful	Bored
Cautious	Annoyed	Confident	Curious	Demure	Determined	Disappointed	Cold
Disapproving	Disbelieving	Disgusted	Dictateful	Eavesdropping	Ecstatic	Envious	Exhausted
Frightened	Frustrated	Grieving	Guilty	Happy	Horrified	Hungover	Hurt
Hot	Hysterical	Indifferent	Idiotic	Innocent	Interested	Jealous	Joyful
Loaded	Lonely	Lovestruck	Medative	Mischievious	Miserable	Negative	Obstinate
Optimistic	Pained	Paranoid	Perplexed	Prudish	Puzzled	Regretful	Relieved
Sad	Satisfied	Shocked	Smug	Surprised	Suspicious	Thoughtful	Coy
unsure	excited	Mixed	Irritated	Peaceful	Thankful	Lucky	Tired

17.05.2006.

Source: The Valued Citizens (Educators' guide)

APPENDIX F

Facial/Feelings Marked

The following faces and feelings were marked that signified pleasure, contentment and satisfaction:

- Blissful   located in the first row.
- Confident   located in the second row.
- Ecstatic   located in the third row.
- Happy   located in the fourth row
- Joyful   located in the fifth row.
- Love struck   located in the sixth row.
- Optimistic   located in the seventh row.
- Satisfied   located in the eighth row.
- Excited   located in the ninth row.
- Peaceful   located in the ninth row.
- Thankful   located in the ninth row.
- Lucky   located in the ninth row.

APPENDIX G

Pictures Chosen

Pictures chosen and explanation given:

1st Picture

Family picture chosen because it portrays happy and complete family. Family happy and in relaxing situation listening to music.

2nd Picture

Portrays people listening to FM radio station dancing and smiling-a sign of happiness enjoying themselves.

3rd Picture

The picture portrays a lady chosen because she enjoys herself and happy with what she does i.e. advertising she likes what she does. She is seen smiling-fulfilled.

4th Picture

A person shown is happy and confident-she advertises she feels the emotion with it.

5th Picture

Picture showed an excited person who advertises and happy with what she does.

6th Picture

A picture of a happy, confident and excited person-real beauty reflected and expresses feelings about what she does.

7th Picture

Picture of true happiness-excitement and nothing bothers friends they are united.

8th Picture

Shows a mother and the child-mother enjoy time with the child; playing with the child.

9th Picture

Party picture-excitement enjoyment and smile.

10th Picture

Picture showed an excited happy not pretending to be somebody else and thankful person to be a star. What she is wearing is clean and smart.

Naïve Sketches

Naïve sketch (awareness phase)
What makes people feel good about themselves?

<u>Learner One</u>

The thing that makes people feel good is that they are always happy and, confident always kind to others. They are conscious of who they are. They know what they stand for and are respectful to other people and not impressing other people. They know that they can feel brighter inside and out, the more bless full they become.

<u>Learner Two</u>

They feel good about themselves and excited, they love people to love them and their unique, no one is not unique, and they are always happy. Something there are just proud about who they are and people honour them.

<u>Learner Three</u>

Sometime some people feel good when they pass their examinations they become happy and excited. Sometime people become happy because of the work and sometime they promote them to be someone who will be paid and feel happiness.
Many people become happy when they are playing sport and they enjoy playing sport. There are many persons who enjoy sport and they make them happy.

<u>Learner Four</u>

People appreciate themselves that's why they feel good about themselves they don't let other people try to destroy them. They don't take other people for granted.
They accept the way they are first no matter how they are, poor, they are ugly, or something. They are just proud about who they are, they inspire themselves because if you don't inspire yourself, believe in yourself people will disinspire you too and disrespect you too. They are so thankful in whatever they have right now.

<u>Learner Five</u>

Enjoy her time with someone or alone. The way he is doing something the more he feel good and confident. To make you feel about your self you can sing you can play something that you want to do. Because she always feel good about herself.

Learner Six

The thing that makes people to feel good is that they know who they are and they know what they want to do in future. They also feel good about themselves when they care for one another, kind, honest, loving and have confidence and believe in yourself, and not tell yourself that you are not going to achieve your goal.

They feel good about themselves when they are satisfied with what they are doing. Other people feel good about themselves when they have money to buy the things that they want to buy and they feel proud about themselves. People feel good about themselves when they do not pretend to be somebody and they can be themselves, you must be yourself no matter what happens.

Learner Seven

What makes people feel good about themselves is that maybe they love what they are doing in their future or how their life is going. And I can say others feel good again about being themselves or being who they are. Things that they do and people around them feel good. Being thankful, satisfied, lucky or maybe being confident about yourself, being with people who love you everyday and loving yourself.

Learner Eight

People feel good about themselves because of they know that they are special, they are having relationship, and they feel good about the things that they are doing and they care what people say about them. They face their future and careers and no one can stop their feeling and themselves. They feel good because always they are happy, excited or joyful and they always love other person that's why people feel good about themselves and they must have themselves and respect them.

Learner Nine

Other people feel good because they like themselves and they enjoyed being what they are. Other people trust themselves and they know well what they are. They are confident that is another thing to feel good about what they are or feel good about themselves.

People feel good about themselves when they are:

Being loved, respected, trusted. All the mentioned points make people feel that they are valuable and they will feel that they is something they live for.

Love is very essential and it is needed in a human being. Respect is a key to the door of human dignity. Trust is way to social-being. Love + respect + trust = being an extraordinary human being.

Focus Group Discussion Report-back

Exploration Phase

Report back

Learner participants report back after their discussion highlighted the needs for personal well-being linked to its aspects.

<u>Group one:</u>

Needed aspects that make someone's feeling to be in state of well-being:

- By giving him/her advise and respect that he/she deserves
- By taking that person out to forget about his/her problem and also be supportive to him/her
- Being kind to that person and tell him/her that it is okay to be angry in life but you must not take your anger on other people
- If you are a person you must face life challenges be strong and you must not lose hope don't give up easily on life
- Have a healthy well behaviour.

<u>Group two:</u>

Aspects of personal well-being:

- Is to appreciate yourself and be proud of yourself
- Tell yourself that you are unique
- Love yourself before you love someone
- Never allow anyone to bring you down
- Believe in yourself, have self-esteem, have hope and faith to yourself
- Be honest to yourself
- Always follow your dreams because dreams can come true
- Don't lie to yourself
- Don't take other people for granted because in return they will also take you for granted
- Anything is possible if you find the strength within yourself.

APPENDIX J

Identified Needs

Personalisation Phase

The following came out as their need for personal well-being:

- Respect

- Loyal

- Honoured

- You need confidence you don't need to doubt yourself

- Self-acceptance be yourself do not want to be someone else, don't pretend to be another person

- You need to be a loving, caring and honest person

- You need to be trustworthy person

- Believe in yourself and high self-esteem

- Faith and hope

- Achieve goals need to have goals and have dreams be something in life and face your challenges to the future

- Being strong

- Active or energy

- Love yourself

- You need to be friendly

- Peace of mind

- Be happy you must be excited about yourself

- You must be satisfied with what you are doing you must not give up easily in life.

APPENDIX K

Naïve Sketches

Naïve sketches (personalisation phase)

1. How do you deal with your needs for personal well-being?
2. How did you experience working on this group work research project?

<u>Learner One</u>

1. To reach your needs for personal well-being you need to achieve your goals and schoolwork. You need faith to believe in yourself open your heart and do the things that your heart tells you or you need to do. Don't side with other people. Socialising with other people.

2. It made me believe in myself have faith and have a personal well-being and being loyal focusing to achieve my goals. I felt blissful working with people who listen to your opinion not teasing and coming up with new things and respecting one another.

<u>Learner Two</u>

1. I deal with my personal well-being by talking to people, I respect myself, I achieve my set goals, and I love people.

2. I did not respect people because of the group I respect people and I am happy about the project and I experience more about it and I always drew about this project and didn't experience this.

<u>Learner Three</u>

1. I make sure that I am happy and to do the right things and respect each other. Not to do problem in future and I can talk to my friend if I have a problem.

2. It was nice and I enjoyed because I learned to think that I did like personal well-being. I was enjoying to do a project with my classmates and I learned how I can reach my dreams and goals in the future and I'm happy to learn with my classmates in this project.

<u>Learner Four</u>

1. I deal with my personal well-being by not giving up my hope being faithful and telling myself that everything is possible only if I believe in myself never give up until I get my needs for personal well-being.

2. I experienced a lot on this research project and I have learned a lot from it, it made me realise who is really a person and it made me realise how special other people are to me, made me to gain respect, to be honest and to be faithful.

Learner Five

1. You need to be strong. You need to love. I need to be confident. You need to improve yourself about what you are doing.

2. I felt confident when I was working on this research. I was so proud about my experience to do this research.

Learner Six

1. You can deal by having strength and be strong being brave and work hard to deal with these needs for the personal well-being. You also need to have a love struck and be a blissful person.

2. I experienced lot of things in this project I feel so happy because I've learned more things I did not know and I'm happy because I now have more knowledge. I also feel good about my classmates I feel good about my educator because she educated me with more things that I did not know. I feel great and honoured about this project and I really appreciate it.

Learner Seven

1. By being thankful for being here today right now. And letting no one to do you down and always thinking the best of you.

2. I felt happy because I experienced many things and I learned things that I never knew about myself. Working with my classmates was great because I'm used to them already. I enjoyed the case because the things we talked about were so interesting. Learning more about that would be so cool, I would love to work with Mrs Lomile, and I thank her for this opportunity. Love you and I appreciate that you are loving, caring and honest.

Learner Eight

1. When I want to deal with my need for my personal well-being I must be in need.   Respect people who will respect me and to be loyal have people to be happy all the time on each other and I must have or show my confidence.

2. The experience that I had since we started I felt to be a good learner every time it affect me on the other learners they don't respect me but they want me to respect them so this is why it affects me. But all my classmate learners that are

my group members on the Life Orientation period they are good and also respect each other they are always happy and always the educator is a good educator because she shows us a good way to do in our future.

<u>Learner Nine</u>

1. I make sure that I'm always happy. And no one can take my happiness away from me and I make sure that people see that I'm Happy.
2. I was so happy and very good listener and I gained more things that I need to have them. I was always asking myself when Wednesday came when we would go to the group work session.

<u>Learner Ten</u>

1. I try by all means to learn from my previous mistakes and improve my weaknesses by focusing on things that give me hard time.
2. It was totally a good experience working together, learning new things and also sharing our knowledge and understanding the basics of life that we discussed were as interesting as ever.

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