

**FINAL YEAR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE
OF SUPERVISION DURING COMMUNITY FIELDWORK PRACTICE.**

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**A minithesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Magister Scientiae in the Department of Occupational Therapy,
WESTERN CAPE
University of the Western Cape.**

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ABSTRACT

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Fieldwork is seen to be an essential component in the curriculum of an undergraduate occupational therapy (OT) program through which students develop their professional behavior and apply theoretical education to clinical practice. Students in their final year of the undergraduate OT program at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) use the UWC Community Process as a guide to community fieldwork in community settings. This process follows a community development approach to allow students to focus on the needs of the community. The community fieldwork placement is compulsory for all final year OT students. The main aims of the placement are for students to develop their understanding of the role of an occupational therapist in a community setting and to enhance their understanding of the occupational nature of communities. This study focuses on final year UWC OT students' experiences of the supervision they received while following the steps of the Community Process as well as their perceptions of the relationship between their supervision and their learning about occupation based community practice. The aim of the study was to explore how the 2009 final year OT students experienced fieldwork supervision during their community fieldwork placement. The study followed an interpretivist paradigm

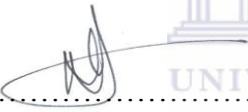
with a qualitative research methodological approach and a phenomenological design. Purposeful sampling was used to select participants from the UWC OT department who undertook their community fieldwork placement in 2009. All the data utilized in this study was directly linked to the students' experiences of supervision during their learning of the Community Process. Therefore, the methods of data collection that were used included the students' daily reflective journals, their portfolio files and an evaluative focus group held at the end of the year 2009. All data was critically analyzed through a process of thematic analysis in order to meet the research objectives. The techniques of triangulation and a detailed description of the research process were employed to ensure trustworthiness of the study. The ethical principles of autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence as well as informed written consent were adhered to in the study. The findings of the study highlighted the emotions that the students experienced, the development of their professional judgement and the challenges and experiences they encountered in their personal and professional development. The findings further showed that the process of becoming a part of the community allowed the students to define their role as an OT in a community setting and to increase their understanding of community development in the context of their role within the community. The findings also emphasized the students' experiences with regards to various teaching and learning techniques and approaches used within the supervision of their community fieldwork placement. The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the generation of an understanding of how supervision influences students' understanding of occupation-based community practice in occupational therapy.

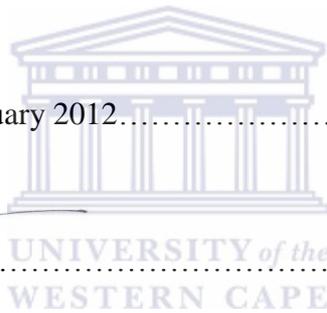
DECLARATION

I declare that *Final Year Occupational Therapy Students' Experience of Supervision during Community Fieldwork Practice* is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Full name:.....Nicola Vermeulen.....

Date:.....24th February 2012.....

Signed:..........



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Fieldwork is an essential component in the undergraduate curriculum of an occupational therapy (OT) education programme. Through fieldwork students develop their professional behaviour and apply theoretical knowledge to clinical practice. Fieldwork is described as the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes that occur in students as a result of practical experiences in the real world of work (Duncan & Alsop, 2006). According to Hagedorn and Adams (2006) supervision is an integral feature of fieldwork education which promotes learning, professional development, maintenance of academic standards and quality assurance.

Within the literature on fieldwork education there is a range of terminology used to define what it is that students do. This terminology ranges from fieldwork and clinical practice to service learning and practice learning. Duncan and Alsop (2006) state that the use of the term clinical practice is generally associated with learning occurring in a clinical setting with a focus on the clinical treatment of individuals' health. Conversely, the term practice education is aligned with the social model of disability in which students collaborate with disabled and 'at-risk' persons in addressing issues that are mutually identified. According to Duncan and Alsop (2006), practice education is used interchangeably with fieldwork education as an overarching term for the development of knowledge, skills and

attitudes that students attain as a result of practical experiences in the 'real world'. They add that service learning is an emerging educational approach in the OT profession in which educational aspects of the profession are aligned to a community's needs and in collaboration with the community, a project is created. In this study the term fieldwork education is used in order to remain consistent with current literature.

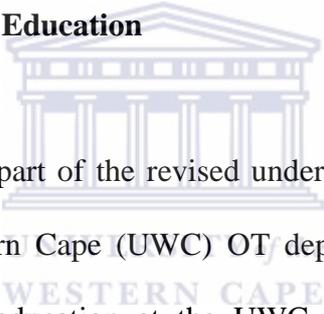
In South Africa in recent years, the National Department of Health adopted the primary healthcare philosophy (WHO, 1978) as a lead approach in addressing the social issues and developments of the country (Duncan & Alsop, 2006). In response to the adoption of the primary healthcare approach (WHO, 1978) by the National Department of Health in South Africa, OT students are required to work collaboratively with individuals, groups and communities. Likewise, the World Federation of Occupational Therapy's (WFOT) Minimum Standards (Hocking & Ness, 2002, p. 10) suggest that educational programmes align themselves with the three orientations of biomedical, occupational and sociopolitical in order to ensure that OT graduates are equipped to meet the social and developmental needs of their country. As a result, the profession of occupational therapy has made significant changes in its approach to practice. These changes have revolved around a shift from a focus on individualized treatment within a medical model to a comprehensive approach with a focus on health promotion and prevention (Adams & Wonnacott, 2006). The response of occupational therapy curricula to the changing approaches has been in engaging non-traditional and role-emerging occupational therapy placements, for example community sites, which expose students to multi-sectoral learning in fieldwork.

Overton, Clark and Thomas (2009) state that role-emerging placements do not have an established OT role or service and as such are designed to promote OT in these settings. Role-emerging placements have become increasingly common in OT fieldwork education as it addresses the shortage of placement opportunities while at the same time enhances students' learning experiences and exploring possible employment settings (Fieldhouse & Fedden, 2009). Traditional or role-established placements generally employ a one-to-one apprenticeship model of supervision involving direct supervision from an on-site OT while in a role-emerging placement students receive direct supervision from a non-OT staff member with indirect supervision from an OT educator (Overton, Clark & Thomas, 2009). Mulholland and Derald (2005) state that the use of role-emerging placements presents unique challenges. These challenges are centered around the lack of direct on-site OT supervision, the lack of an OT role at these sites and the lack of an OT role model. As a result the biggest challenge surrounding the use of role-emerging placements is how to provide students with an adequate level of supervision and the necessary support in order to facilitate their learning.

According to Duncan and Alsop (2006) multi-sectoral learning exposes students to the sociopolitical realities that impact on the health of individuals, groups, and communities, and requires alternative interpretations of practice from those traditionally associated with the profession. Similarly, Bonello (2001a) states that the traditional form of one dimensional teaching and assessment during the process of fieldwork education is shifting towards new understandings which resulted in OT undergraduate education programmes exploring creative alternatives for fieldwork education. She adds that pioneering practices for

improving the quality of fieldwork education should consider each country's health, economic and educational status, as it is only in this way that new graduates will be nurtured into meeting the challenge of working with changing health care environments. These new understandings of teaching and learning in OT education motivated the UWC OT department to engage in a process of curriculum revision that in turn lead to the development of a revised fieldwork education programme. Therefore, the focus of this study is on the 2009 final year UWC OT students' experiences of their community fieldwork and the supervision they received.

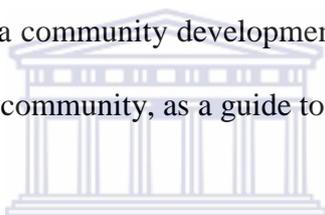
1.2 UWC Fieldwork Education



Fieldwork education, as part of the revised undergraduate OT curriculum of the University of the Western Cape (UWC) OT department, extends from first to fourth year. Fieldwork education at the UWC OT department is community orientated and community based. The purpose of fieldwork education is to produce graduates who will understand their clients as occupational beings and who will base their interventions on sound theoretical principles and models of OT (UWC, Statement of Approach, 2008). According to De Jongh (2009) in a description of the revised UWC OT curriculum, the students in their first year of the undergraduate programme are introduced to the concepts of occupation and are provided with opportunities to observe the role of therapists in various occupational therapy practice settings. Students in their second year are provided with fieldwork opportunities in which they are able to practice the clinical skills of assessment while students in their third year are provided with two fieldwork

placements in which they engage in the process of assessment, planning and intervention with paediatric and adult clients respectively.

In their fourth and final year, the students are required to undertake three fieldwork placements in a variety of settings. Within these respective fieldwork placements, students implement one of three processes adopted by the UWC OT department. These are the Individual, Group and Community Processes. The Individual Process focuses on the client, his/her context and life story while the Group Process focuses on a group of clients taking their context and needs into account. In community settings, students use the UWC Community Process (See Appendix 1) which uses a community development approach to allow students to focus on the needs of the community, as a guide to community fieldwork.



This community fieldwork placement is compulsory for all final year OT students in which the main aims of the placement are for students to develop their understanding of the role of an OT in a community setting and to enhance their understanding of the occupational nature of communities. Therefore all the students get to implement the steps of the community process (See Figure 1). The Community Process focuses on gaining an understanding of all aspects of a community in which intervention is then based on the priority needs which have been highlighted through a needs assessment. The first step in the Community Process requires students to engage in the process of community entry using the principles of look, listen and learn. According to Adams and Wonnacott (2006) community entry is a sensitive process that requires an awareness and understanding of communities, interpersonal relationships and group processes.

Tareen and Omar (1997) add that community entry, which is a gradual and time consuming process that depends on how the community is approached and worked with, is an essential step in the process of community participation.

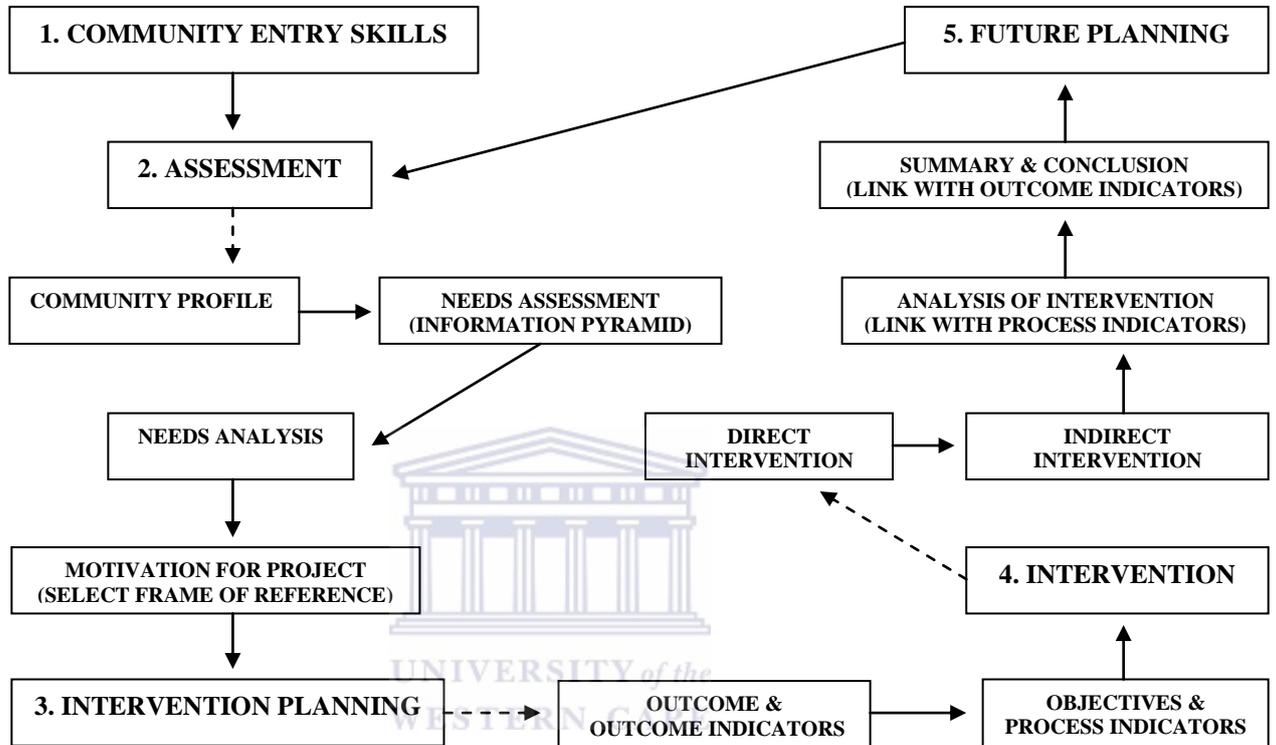
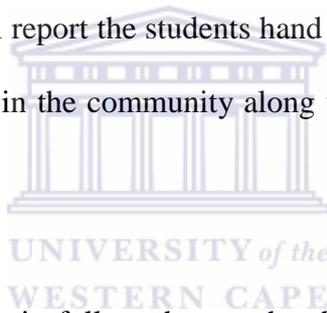


Figure 1: UWC OT Department Community Process

The community profile is compiled to provide the student with information on the infrastructure and the dynamics of the community while a needs assessment is done by making use of the information pyramid (Annett & Rifkin, 1995) which provides information on the community, its environment, services, as well as the existing policies that guide it. Students then use the information they have obtained to perform a needs analysis in order to determine what the occupational needs of the community are. Using OT frames of reference and Health Promotion principles students then motivate for a project.

During their intervention planning, students establish outcome indicators which assist them in measuring whether their outcome was achieved. They also establish process indicators which act as markers in order to assist them in achieving the objectives. Intervention is the students' actual implementation of the project. This involves indirect intervention, which are the indirect activities that students need to do in order to achieve the direct intervention which are all the activities that are directly linked to the project. Once the project has been implemented, the student then engages in an analysis of the intervention in which the student reflects on whether the objectives and process indicators have been met. The summary and conclusion requires the student to reflect on whether the outcome of the project has been met. In the final report the students hand over the final documentation to the relevant role players in the community along with any recommendations that they may have.



The Community Process is followed over the duration of the year with three different groups of students implementing different steps of the process. The first group of students implement community entry and community assessment in term one, group two implements intervention planning and intervention in term two, while group three implements analysis and future planning in term four (See Figure 2). Even though different students are assigned to execute the various steps of the Community Process, they work together as a team with regard to the implementation of the overall project. This is achieved through student driven tutorials each Friday with the collective group (group one, two and three) where the students actively involved at that point provide feedback and hand over to the other groups. Even though the third term is allocated to the research module for

the final year students, once a week the collective group (group one, two and three) spend the day in the community implementing the project. Each year new final year students are placed in the same community and in collaboration with various community organisations and structures continue to develop and adapt the identified community project.

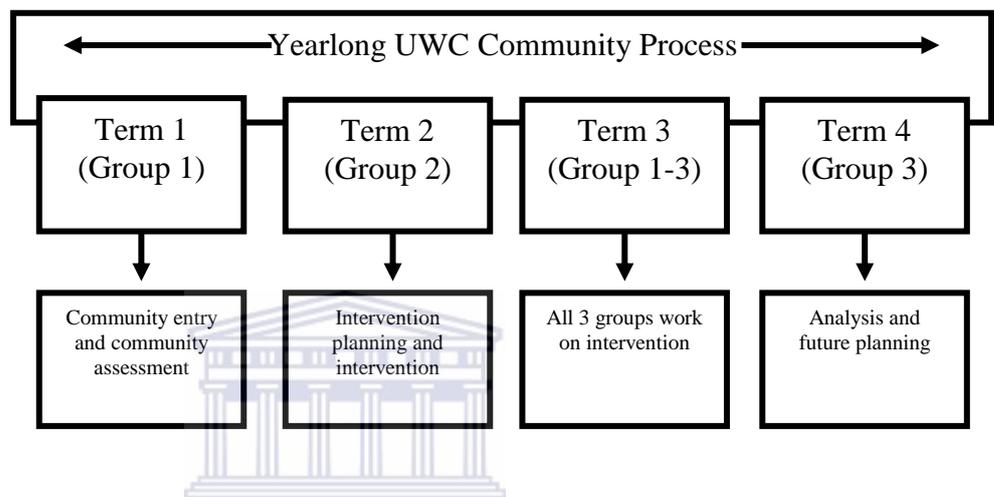


Figure 2: The Yearlong UWC Community Process

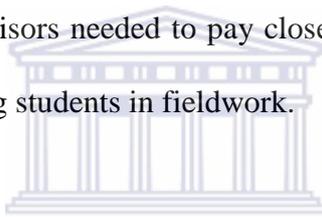
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1.3 Fieldwork Supervision in Community Settings

My primary role as a clinical teaching coordinator in the UWC OT department since 2007 has been the fieldwork supervision of final year students in various community settings. After the first year of supervising students in a community setting using the Community Process, I began to include an occupation focus into my supervision, as occupational therapy's domain centers on the profession's interest in people's ability to engage in occupations. Occupations are activities that hold unique meaning and purpose for individuals (AOTA, 2002). These

occupations are central to a person's identity and competence and influence how people spend their time and make decisions.

The motivation for the inclusion of an occupation focus in my supervision of the students emanated firstly from developments around occupation in the OT profession and secondly from my interpretation of the WFOT Revised Minimum Standards for the Education of Occupational Therapists' (Hocking & Ness, 2002). The revised minimum standards called on all OT education programmes to centralize occupation in all components of OT curricula. This implied that occupation had to be integrated into fieldwork as an integral component of OT curricula and that supervisors needed to pay closer attention to occupation-based practice when supervising students in fieldwork.

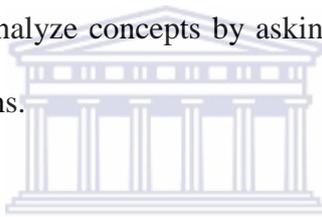


The focus of occupation-based practice is the use of occupation as the foundation for intervention. Price and Miner (2007) state that occupation-based practice emphasizes the use of the individual, group or community's occupations as the form of intervention to promote positive change in the direction of the occupational outcome. Accordingly, I set out to incorporate a more in-depth focus on occupation and occupation-based practice in the supervision of final year OT students in the community. In addition to incorporating an occupation focus in my supervision, I also paid closer attention to the supervision styles and methods I utilized in supervising the students in order to facilitate students' understanding and learning around occupation-based community practice. These include peer learning, on-site supervision, group tutorials, discussions and reflection.

During their community fieldwork placement the students are provided with on-site supervision once a week in which I spend the day in the community with the group. A large part of this day is set aside for a group tutorial which largely follows the Community Process. The topics of discussion during these tutorials allow students the opportunity to understand and implement each step of the community process. In the first tutorial with the student group in each phase of the Community Process, I orientate them to my expectations for the community fieldwork placement in terms of written work, the importance of reflective journaling and academic reading. I explain to students that the community fieldwork placement lacks the learning structure of a fieldwork placement in an institution and that as student OT's working in a community setting they would have to create their own learning structure and guidelines. Personal learning objectives are also explained to the students and they are given an opportunity to set their own learning objectives in terms of what it is they wish to learn over the duration of the seven weeks.

The importance and value of open communication in developing a solid student-supervisor relationship is also explained to the students. They are encouraged to share their anxieties, challenges and accomplishments as well as communicate any personal challenges that they feel could impact on their professional development. Finally, for the first week of the community fieldwork placement, the students are instructed to familiarize themselves with the community and its environment by spending time walking around and acquainting themselves with the community members.

My supervision of the students' learning is structured in such a way to allow the students to reach and understand each step of the Community Process in order for them to implement it. Most of the supervision process during tutorials entails discussions with the students regarding their community fieldwork experiences. During these discussions students are encouraged to share their thoughts, ideas and experiences with each other. In describing or explaining various concepts to the students, layman's terms, analogies and illustrations or diagrams are used to assist the students in their learning. In addition I try to make use of aspects of their learning that the students would have been exposed to in their earlier years of undergraduate study in the OT department such as the 5WH method. This method encourages students to analyze concepts by asking What? Where? When? Why? Who? and How? questions.



As a part of the tutorials held and in assisting the students to understand various concepts, tasks are given to them in an attempt to reinforce their learning. Students are given questions which they are required to research. Journal articles are provided to the students which they are asked to read in order for them to try and formulate understandings of certain concepts prior to tutorial discussions. Students are also given written and verbal feedback on their written work and their reflective journals. Through the feedback provided I attempt to foster the students' thinking and their ability to integrate theory into practice. Where appropriate the students are provided with positive feedback, motivation and acknowledgement of their learning. Lastly, during my supervision of students in the community fieldwork placement, I try to maintain a relaxed learning environment by encouraging the students to be themselves, by including humor as

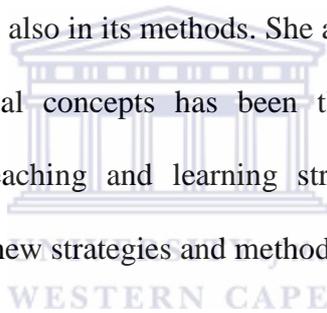
an aspect of student learning, and by allowing students to make mistakes as a learning opportunity.

1.4 Rationale for the Study

As there were no clear guidelines available to support the supervision of students in a community setting, I had to continuously draw from discussions with my colleagues, literature and feedback from students at the end of each fieldwork placement to make professional judgements and decisions about supervision in the new context of occupation-based community practice. By the end of 2009, it seemed evident to me that the inclusion of occupation and occupation-based practice within my supervision resulted in the students' developing new understandings of community focused OT practice. I consequently engaged in a period of reflection on the supervision styles and methods I employed in supervising the students and became interested in researching the students' experience of my supervision as well as their perceptions of the role that supervision played in their learning about occupation-based community practice. Therefore, the focus of this study is on the students' experiences of their community fieldwork and the supervision they received. The purpose of the study is to explore students' perceptions of the supervision styles and methods they were subjected to while following the steps of the Community Process. In addition, the study explores the students' perceptions of their learning related to occupation-based community practice and the role that supervision played in their learning.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Whiteford and Wilcock (2001) state that research that has focused on understanding the phenomenon of humans as occupational beings as well as the consolidation of occupationally focused practice models and approaches, has influenced and revitalized OT practice and service delivery worldwide. They believe that it is now time to consider to what extent OT curricula reflect these changes. Similarly, in a question posed by Ann Wilcock (2000), she asks whether OT education programmes reflect the profession's philosophical beliefs about the importance of occupation in the health of individuals and communities, not only in curriculum content but also in its methods. She adds that once the content of the profession's philosophical concepts has been thoroughly integrated into OT education, traditional teaching and learning strategies and methods may be rejected or adapted, and new strategies and methods adopted or developed.



It is therefore vital for OT educational programmes to consider how OT curricula should change, not only in terms of the theoretical inclusion of occupation into undergraduate programmes, but also in terms of how these changes are reflected and practiced in undergraduate OT fieldwork education. The significance of exploring the 2009 final year students' experiences and perceptions of community fieldwork therefore lies in its contribution to generating an understanding of how supervision influences students' understanding of occupation-based community practice. As specific teaching and learning strategies and methods that facilitate the professional development of OT students during fieldwork education were

identified in this study, its findings will inform the facilitation of occupation-based practice through the UWC OT curriculum.

1.6 Aims and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to explore how 2009 final year OT student's experienced fieldwork supervision during their community fieldwork placement.

The objectives of the study were:

- 1.5.1 To explore final year OT students' feelings regarding their community fieldwork experience;
- 1.5.2 To explore final year OT students' perceptions about their learning related to community focused OT during community fieldwork;
- 1.5.3 To explore final year OT students' perceptions about their learning related to occupation-based practice during community fieldwork and
- 1.5.4 To explore how final year OT students' experienced the various supervision styles and methods they were exposed to during community fieldwork.

In the next chapter literature pertaining to the key concepts addressed in this study will be reviewed.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter current trends and issues in the literature on fieldwork education and supervision with specific reference to the role in teaching and learning in OT fieldwork education is reviewed. In addition, literature regarding community development and community based OT practice as well as occupation-based practice is highlighted.

2.1 Fieldwork Education

Bonello (2001a) states that fieldwork education, which serves as a practical component of any curriculum is integral to assisting students in integrating theory into practice. As an element of OT education, fieldwork education is therefore influential in developing professional behaviour (Bonello, 2001a). The world leaders in occupational therapy have accurately defined the purpose and expectations of fieldwork education which has long been recognized as a fundamental component of student learning in occupational therapy education (Cohn, 1989, as cited in Mackenzie, 2002). They assert that fieldwork education provides exclusive opportunities to apply theories and facts learnt in a classroom setting and that it allows students to learn and refine practical skills. The revised World Federation of Occupational Therapy's (WFOT) Minimum Standards (Hocking & Ness, 2002, p.31) define fieldwork as,

“the time students spend interpreting specific person-occupation-environment relationships and their relationship to health and well-being, establishing and evaluating therapeutic and professional

relationships, implementing an occupational therapy process (or some aspect of it), demonstrating professional reasoning and behaviours, and generating or using knowledge of the contexts of professional practice with and for real live people”.

From these definitions it can be derived that learning by doing is particularly important in occupational therapy, as practical wisdom is not always formulated in words (Allison & Turpin, 2004).

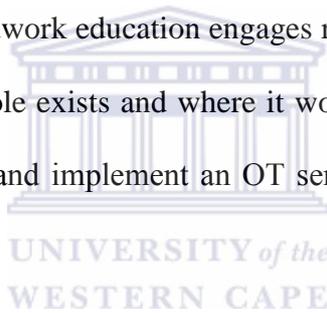
A common debate in the fieldwork literature revolves around the optimum range and type of experience that a student should gain prior to qualifying, and whether emphasis should be placed on the depth or breadth of the student’s experience (Alsop & Ryan, 1996). Fiddler (1977, as cited in Bonello, 2001a), states that fieldwork education should be directed towards the teaching of therapy and the development of technical skills, while Savin-Baden (1996, as cited in Bonello, 2001a) argues that it is more important that students develop competency in problem solving, problem management and the retrieval of information rather than striving to learn certain facts and practical skills. Anderson (1986, as cited in Alsop & Ryan, 1996) echoes this sentiment by claiming that the depth of experience across fewer placements encourages deeper understanding and higher levels of competence in students. This leads to more sophisticated performance in practice. Alsop and Ryan (1996) add to this debate by arguing that if students have more in-depth experiences with a particular client group they should be able to meet the needs of those clients more effectively than when they only have one brief encounter with the clients on a short fieldwork placement. In contrast, several shorter placements allow students to see how a number of different organizations function, they meet a number of therapists who work in different

ways and also learn from working with a range of client groups (Alsop & Ryan, 1996). This therefore allows students to gain a more comprehensive view of the profession and of the interrelatedness of institutional and community care. To date there is no conclusive decision regarding whether the depth or breadth of a fieldwork placement is more conducive to student learning.

In addition to the development of the students' practical skills, fieldwork education allows the student the opportunity to be socialized into the profession. Cohn and Crist, (1995, as cited in Allison & Turpin, 2004) state that fieldwork education provides students with the opportunity to work in a real-life practice setting. Such settings provide complex problems for which classroom theories and rules are insufficient to inform the decision making process (Allison & Turpin, 2004). Furthermore, they are of the opinion that the manner in which students combat these challenges is through integrating knowledge and practical skills with clinical reasoning skills which mainly occurs through fieldwork experience. Buchanan and Cloete (2006, p.76) propose that even though the theory and strategies to facilitating clinical reasoning can be taught in a classroom setting, the students' ability to 'reason-in-action' can only be developed during fieldwork when students work with 'real clients in real contexts'. They assert that the facilitation of the development of the students' clinical reasoning skills in these real life settings is one of the most important tasks of a fieldwork supervisor.

In linking with the tasks of a fieldwork supervisor, there are many challenges that a fieldwork supervisor could face during fieldwork education while facilitating students' professional development. For instance, Duncan and Alsop (2006, p.10)

highlight limited professional resources, under-resourced infrastructures, rapid de-hospitalization and de-institutionalization, stark distinctions between affluent health facilities and poorly resourced public sector facilities, and cultural and language differences to be among the factors that influence the implementation and management of fieldwork education. Due to these factors, the traditional apprenticeship model of fieldwork in which students learn from an experienced clinician in an established service has become ‘the exception rather than the rule’. Duncan and Alsop (2006) further state that traditional approaches to OT fieldwork education that occur completely in a medical model are no longer sufficient or appropriate if OT is to be socially responsive. It is for this reason that Galvaan (2006) suggests that fieldwork education engages role-emerging settings where no OT programme or OT role exists and where it would be the responsibility of the OT student to establish and implement an OT service, thereby broadening OT’s social role.

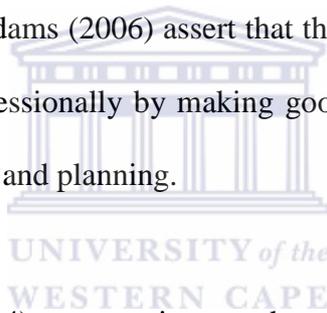


Despite the volumes of literature that state that the lack of institutionalized fieldwork placements is the reason for the development of role-emerging placements, other factors have been identified that support the use of these placements as fieldwork learning opportunities (Overton et al., 2009). Amongst these factors is the developing complexity and diversity of the OT profession with an increase in community based practice, and the notion that with the use of role-emerging placements, the OT profession has unlimited potential in exploring new practice niche areas. It is the opinion of Overton et al., (2009) that through the use of role-emerging placements, students and supervisors are allowed to explore the

boundaries of their teaching and learning practices which if positive, will improve the recruitment and retention of OT graduates in community and rural areas.

2.2 Fieldwork Supervision

According to Thomas, Penman, and Williamson (2005) in order to optimize student learning during fieldwork, the support of practicing occupational therapists as supervisors is essential. Yerxa (1994) defines a supervisor as one, who by reason of his/her greater knowledge and skill establishes a relationship that leads, teaches, supports and provides a guideline of performance for another person. Hagedorn and Adams (2006) assert that the aim of supervision is to allow students to develop professionally by making good use of evaluation, reflection, effective communication and planning.



According to Yerxa (1994), a supervisor needs to perform four key functions for effective supervision. These are (1) setting the stage for the students' motivation and energy use in their learning by role modelling a professional OT; (2) teaching more than facts, i.e. principles and attitudes that are essential to professional practice; (3) providing support to the students as support enhances growth toward independence of thought and action; and (4) providing the student with reliable guidelines of performance and evaluation so that the student may be in a position of knowing how and where to change. Bradley, Lewis, Hendricks and Crews (2008) suggest that another role for fieldwork supervisors should include the teaching and modeling of advocacy to students which they define as the act of speaking on behalf of clients and taking action to make environmental changes for

clients. They believe that supervisors should challenge, stimulate and encourage students to reach higher levels of competency through teaching students that advocacy is a process of professional development. Bradley et al., (2008) asserts that the fieldwork supervisor must have an understanding of advocacy and be able to put advocacy into action in order to teach students to be advocates for their clients.

With regards to the supervisory relationship, Fone (2006) asserts that it is a two-way relationship which is driven more by the needs of the student than the supervisor. She believes that good supervision is about moving away from the notion of control to one of being enabled in which the student is not taught, nor directed, nor given answers; but rather they are guided to find new directions and to make changes to practice. Yerxa (1994) agrees with this when she states that a good supervisor practices supervisory techniques that, if successful, will ensure that the student grows beyond the need of the supervisor.

In a study that examined OT students' perspectives of effective supervisor characteristics, Mulholland, Derald and Roy (2006) found that supervisors that created a supportive and encouraging environment promoted the students' learning. The students in their study expressed an appreciation for effective feedback which was clear, supportive, continuous and specific as well as being challenged in new learning opportunities. Also highlighted in this study (Mulholland et al., 2006) were supervisor traits of friendliness, a relaxed manner, patience and a sense of humor which students felt were a desirable aspect of fieldwork supervision. Similarly, Mason (1998) lists other qualities of an effective

supervisor as identified by students as having good interpersonal skills, being committed to being a supervisor, showing students respect, setting clear expectations and providing substantial feedback. She asserts that within non-traditional fieldwork placements where supervision is no longer on a one-to-one basis but includes group supervision, the qualities of a supervisor are extended to include the ability to facilitate group learning in which the students are encouraged to discover, express, listen and share knowledge gained and personal meanings encountered.

In addressing teaching and learning aspects related to supervision in contemporary fieldwork settings, Fisher and Savin-Badin (2002) propose the implementation of three different models of supervision as opposed to the traditional one-to-one model of supervision in order to better equip students for fieldwork practice. These models are the (1) 'role-emerging', (2) 'collaborative' and (3) 'interagency' models of supervision. The role-emerging supervision model is implemented with students who are placed in settings where there is no OT, allowing them to become more independent and autonomous. The collaborative model of supervision is congruent with adult-learning principles where the responsibility for the learning lies predominantly with the student. Fisher and Savin-Badin (2002) assert that this model of supervision views both the student and supervisor as equal partners in the learning process thereby allowing students to be active learners with increased independence and improved problem solving skills. Lastly, the interagency model of supervision is based on the notion that supervisors collaborate with therapists or organizations in order to share the responsibility for the students' learning. As a result the interagency model of

supervision merges the traditional one-to-one model with that of the role-emerging model providing students with the opportunity to gain professional supervision as well as to develop new roles in collaboration with other professions. According to Thomas et al., (2005), these different models of supervision provide students with different learning opportunities. They assert that in the traditional one-to-one model students learn skills required for a well-established OT role while in contrast, in the role-emerging model, students need to identify the OT role. The interagency model however allows students to develop the knowledge and skills in order to do both (Thomas et al., 2005).

Also with regards to supervision in role-emerging or community sites, Mulholland and Derald (2005) list a variety of supervision models that can be utilized. These models include the consultative model which has been documented to foster reflection, independence and self-directed learning in students. Most of these models involve indirect or off-site supervision by an OT. In some cases contract OT's are employed at sites to supervise students. Mulholland and Derald (2005) highlight that there is limited literature that evaluates the impact of these supervision models on the students' learning in role-emerging placements.

Even though a list of supervision models have been highlighted in this study (Refer to Pg21), there is a dearth of literature on what supervisory model would be most effective in a community setting and which supervisory styles and techniques would best facilitate students' learning in a non-traditional placement. For this reason I also turned to literature around teaching and learning approaches

utilized as part of OT practice as will be highlighted (see Section 2.5) further along in this study.

2.3 Occupation-based practice

According to AOTA (2007), OT education should be grounded in the belief that humans are complex beings. They further state that the profession of OT is unique and dynamic as it is grounded in the core principles of occupation. There is currently no consensus on a collective definition of occupation within the OT profession. However, many definitions consider occupation to be experienced by the individual and as such portray it as a subjective experience (Leclair, 2010). Dickie (2009) states that for one to understand occupation, one needs to explore what it is that humans do with their time, how they organise these activities, what it is that drives them to pursue such activities and what these activities mean for the individual as well as for society. Yerxa (1993) adds that some of the fundamental characteristics of occupation are that it is self-initiated, goal-directed, experiential, behavioural, socially valued, comprised of adaptive skills, organised, necessary to the quality of life and that it possesses the capacity to influence health.

Wilcock (1999, p. 1) developed the terms “doing, being and becoming” as a synthesis for describing occupational engagement. She states that doing seems to be synonymous with the OT profession as it holds the essence of occupation but that the process of doing that defines occupation, involves more emphasis on the self. This she says leads to being which requires that people have time to ‘discover

themselves, to think, to reflect and to simply exist' in what they are doing (Wilcock, 1999, p. 5). She explains that becoming holds the notions of potential, growth, transformation and self-actualisation as it adds to the concept of a sense of the future. Wilcock (1999) asserts that it is important for OT's to understand and act on the concept of enabling occupation (doing, being and becoming) as it is vital to the occupational health and well-being of individuals and communities.

In addressing the notion of shared occupations, Leclair (2010) laments the fact that although being a significant phenomenon, shared occupations amongst individuals, groups and communities are not widely explored within OT literature. Trentham, Cockburn, and Shin (2007) similarly emphasises the importance of supporting an individual's engagement in shared occupations. They suggest that this could be done through the use of community development strategies which could influence both individual and community health. Wilcock (2006) adds to this notion by stating that occupation presents the opportunity for social interaction, social development and growth which forms the basis of community identity. In this way health is supported when individuals and communities are able to engage in occupations and activities that allow them to achieve the desired outcome of participation in their chosen environments (AOTA, 2002).

In linking occupation and health promotion, AOTA (2008) states that there are three critical roles for OT's in health promotion and disability prevention: (1) to promote healthy lifestyles; (2) to emphasise occupation as an essential element of health promotion strategies; and (3) to provide interventions to individuals,

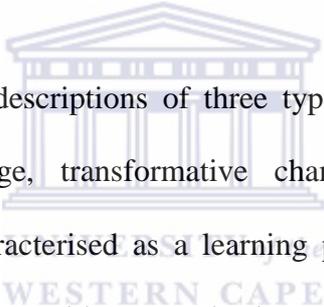
groups, and communities. An occupation-based approach to prevention of illness and disability is defined by Wilcock (2006, p. 282) as,

“The application of medical, behavioural, social and occupational science to prevent physiological, psychological, social, and occupational illness; accidents; and disability; and to prolong quality of life for all people through advocacy and mediation and through occupation focused programs aimed at enabling people to do, be, and become according to their natural health needs.”

In accordance, AOTA (2007) emphasises that OT educators advocate the use of occupation to facilitate health promoting growth and change with the goal of facilitating peoples’ participation in meaningful occupations. As such, occupation-based practice is not only concerned with enabling occupation, but also includes the meaning-making aspects of therapy with particular reference to the process of helping people, groups and communities live successfully and confidently in the social world (Price & Miner, 2007). It is the view of Townsend, Cockburn, Letts, Thibeault, and Trentham (2007) that occupation-based therapists conceptualise their individual clients and groups as occupational beings with occupational needs, interests, expectations and goals. In communities, the occupation-based therapist interprets the needs that present in the community from an occupational perspective rather than conceptualising only the individual client or group. With all clients however, whether individual, group or community, occupation-based therapists seek to determine how best to enable performance of and engagement in desired occupations as it is the meaning that is ascribed to occupations and the experience that is associated with them, that makes these occupations such a powerful tool in the OT process (Townsend et al., 2007).

2.4 Community Development and Community Based OT Practice

According to Reeler (2007), it is important to observe and understand the change processes that exist in communities prior to doing needs analyses and designing projects to meet those needs. He states that this will allow those working towards social change to respond more considerately towards the realities of the existing change process rather than impose projects based on their own assumptions. Reeler (2007) asserts that social change is a dynamic complex process and that those working in these contexts should be aware that a simple set of tools or guidelines will not assist with the difficulties that arise within change processes.



Reeler (2007) provides descriptions of three types of social change that exist, namely emergent change, transformative change and projectable change. Emergent change is characterised as a learning process and is concerned with individuals, families, communities, organisations and societies learning from and adapting to the unfolding of day-to-day life and experiences. Transformative change is concerned with what Reeler (2007, pp. 9 – 14) calls ‘crisis or stuckness’ which comes in the form of the complex histories and dynamics that exist in communities. This can be viewed as surface experiences of visible conflict or underlying factors which cannot be seen or talked about. Projectable change is characterised by a problem-based approach in which problems are identified and solutions sought, or through a creative stance where future desires are identified and stepping stones are devised in reaching those goals. Reeler (2007) asserts that projectable approaches which occur through community projects are most likely to succeed in communities where problems, needs and possibilities are visible and

overwhelming crisis or stuckness is not present. According to Reeler (2007) all three types of social change may occur in any given community with one avenue of social change more dominant than the others. He asserts that the responsibility of the practitioner working in the community is to be aware of the social change processes that are at play, to be responsive to the movement of social change in the community and to adjust community practice accordingly.

It is Watson's (2004, p. 51) belief that in order for change to occur, social development needs to be equitable for all; power, or Reeler's (2007) 'crisis and stuckness' needs to be recognised as a central issue; and all people must be enabled to achieve a better life for themselves. Watson (2004) is of the opinion that in order to promote social development the four main areas that should be addressed are an enabling environment, employment, poverty alleviation and the eradication of social exclusion. She asserts that OT could significantly address these four areas if the profession adopted a population rather than individual perspective and embraced health from a promotive and preventative perspective.

Health professionals who work in communities and from a population approach often do so from a Health Promotion perspective. The World Health Organisation (WHO, 1986) defines health promotion as the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve their health. The OT profession uses community development, a key component of health promotion, as a strategy in addressing social development from a population perspective. Community development is defined as a process of supporting communities to increase their self-reliance by identifying their health priorities and planning and implementing

strategies for change (Labonte, 1993 as cited in Lauckner, Pentland, & Paterson, 2007).

Rothman and Tropman (1987, as cited in Lauckner et al., 2007) outline three approaches to working with communities. These are: (1) social planning, (2) locality development and (3) social action. They describe the social planning approach to emphasise a high reliance on outside experts who take on the role of advisor, consultant and fact gatherer. This approach however is often criticized for not incorporating the key principles of community development because of its expert involvement. Rothman and Tropman (1987, as cited in Lauckner et al., 2007) state that in locality development, the community developer is the facilitator who brings people together to share their experiences thereby emphasising consensus and collaboration. They add that the social action approach builds on the belief that social action combines local knowledge with the community developer's political knowledge in order to create change at a political level thereby ensuring change through the redistribution of power.

Community development has been identified as an approach that OT's can use to make a unique contribution to the health of communities (Lauckner et al., 2007). There is however limited research exploring the OT's role in community development (Watson, 2004). In a study designed to address the information gap regarding the role of the OT in community development, the participants of the study described community development from an OT perspective as a multi-layered, community driven process in which relationships are developed and the community's capacity strengthened to affect social change that will promote

access to and the ability to engage in occupations (Lauckner et al., 2007, p. 319). Similarly Watson (2004) states that in order for community development to be successful, community entry and engagement need to be appropriate, partnerships with the community need to be developed, and fair participation with the community needs to be maintained. It is her belief that OT's commitment to the community development process is for the establishment of equitable opportunities and resources within the community with the main aim of enabling all people's engagement in meaningful occupations.

In linking with the definitions and descriptions of community development from an OT perspective, Whiteford (2000) proposes three dimensions that OT's need to consider in order to affect social change in communities through people's engagement in meaningful occupations. The first is the need for OT's to adopt an occupational perspective by viewing the world through 'occupational eyes' in order to consider the occupational needs of people as individuals and as members of society. The second dimension involves OT's having to think and act at a broader social and cultural level in order to advocate against social and institutional structures and policies that inhibit people from full occupational participation. The third and final dimension proposed by Whiteford (2000) is the need for OT's to embrace the concept of occupational justice in order to advocate for resources which aims to create occupationally 'just' societies based on people's needs and rights to engage in occupations.

According to Pettican and Bryant (2007), occupational justice arose out of the belief that social justice did not consider the imbalance that occurs between

people in communities who have a wide variety of occupational choices and opportunities versus those that are restricted from, or even have no choice in the occupations they engage in. They add that limitations in engaging in occupations or opportunities to engage in occupations are factors that inhibit or facilitate the development of individuals and communities. Galvin, Wilding and Whiteford (2011, p.379) support these views of occupational justice by stating that the emphasis of occupational justice is on the unique potential and needs of individuals and communities because it recognises the aspirational dimensions of occupational participation.

Townsend and Wilcock (2004) assert that it is important for OT professionals to be able to recognise where occupational injustices exist within individuals and communities and that working towards enabling occupational justice is consistent with activism for clients and communities. Similarly Paul-Ward (2009, p. 82) states that OT educators and supervisors should take up a more active occupational justice role in the training of students as each individual success contributes towards the social change of clients and communities when they are empowered to advocate for themselves and for others.

2.5 Teaching and Learning Approaches in Fieldwork Education

In this section various teaching and learning approaches that are utilized within OT fieldwork education and practice will be highlighted. These include Self-directed Learning, Experiential Learning, Problem-based Learning, Peer Learning, Reflective practice and aspects of the Four-Quadrant Model (4QM) of Facilitated

Learning. Aspects of the aforementioned approaches are used within fieldwork supervision and support teaching and learning practices in fieldwork education and learning in community settings.

2.5.1 Self-directed Learning

Self-directed learning is defined by Knowles (1975, as cited in Ryan, 1993, p. 54) as “a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes”. Ryan (1993) states that in order for students to develop the skills that are noted in Knowles’ (1975) definition of self-directed learning, it must be embedded within their learning process and outcomes and students must be engaged in active, repeated and guided practice within the learning process. He argues that this deliberate process can enhance the relationship between existing and newly acquired knowledge and skills.

In linking the concepts of self-directed learning, Fieldhouse and Fedden (2009) emphasise student approaches to learning as ranging from surface to deep learning. Students who focus more on memorising or reproducing information in order to complete a task rather than developing an understanding of the task, is characterised as surface learners. In contrast, students who are motivated to interpret knowledge as opposed to reproduce it and who try and achieve an understanding of knowledge, are characterised as deep learners. Deep learners generally try and attach personal meaning to what they are learning and make

links to previously learned knowledge. Fieldhouse and Fedden (2009) assert that within OT fieldwork education, self-directed learning is seen to be more effective as an approach to learning as it links with adult learning theories and suggest that role-emerging placements allow students the opportunity to develop a deep understanding and to take greater responsibility for their learning.

Ryan (1993) states that in order for effective self-directed learning to occur, the emphasis of the students' learning needs to be on the process of learning as well as the learning of knowledge. He adds that students should be the ones to take control of their learning and that this learning should focus on exploring and understanding key concepts and principles rather than detailed knowledge of every topic. Finally he states that self-directed learning should occur in an integrated, active environment with the students own experiences being central to this learning process. Towle and Cottrell (1996) support the characteristics for effective self-directed learning and state that experiential learning, problem-based learning, peer learning, and reflective practice are approaches that can be used by supervisors and students to foster skills of self-directed learning.

2.5.2 Experiential Learning

Kolb (1984) developed the experiential learning model which proposes that learning includes four processes that occur in a cycle and that each process must exist in order for learning to occur. Svinicki and Dixon (1987) describe the first process, a concrete experience, as the students' personal engagement in a specific experience. In the second process the student reflects on their experience (reflective observation) from all angles trying to assign meaning to it while in the

third process the student draws logical conclusions from their reflection and adds theoretical concepts to these conclusions. This process is termed abstract conceptualization. The final process, called active experimentation, is where the student uses these conclusions and concepts to guide their decisions and actions that would lead to new concrete experiences.

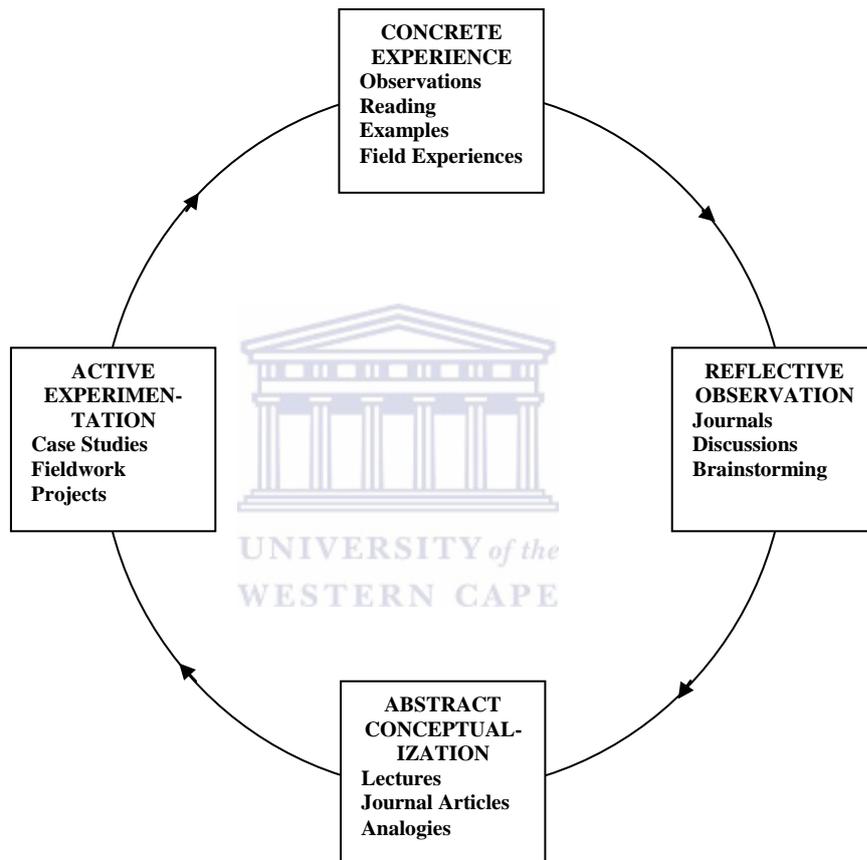


Figure 3: Instructional activities within the Experiential Learning Cycle (Svinicki & Dixon, 1987)

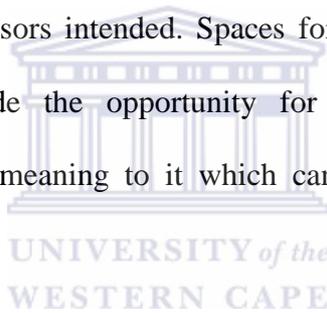
Svinicki and Dixon (1987) propose that certain instructional activities support the various processes in the cycle of experiential learning and that if supervisors use these activities within the sequence of the experiential learning process they should be able to promote more complete learning in students (See Figure 3).

Observations, field experiences and reading are examples of instructional activities designed to provide students with direct personal experiences with content while discussions and journals require students to reflect on their experiences. Lectures, research articles and analogies encourage abstract conceptualization while case studies, projects and fieldwork compel students to apply theoretical concepts to practical experiences.

Similarly, Kolb and Kolb (2005) propose that experiential learning in higher education can be developed by creating learning spaces that promote the learning and growth experiences for students. Based on the premise that education that is centred on experience needs to promote positive learning experiences for it to be successful, Kolb and Kolb (2005, pp. 205 - 209) suggest a number of educational principles that can be used. The first of these educational principles is called 'Respect for Students and Their Experiences'. Kolb and Kolb (2005) state that in order to enhance learning and growth experiences for students, supervisors must consider the total experiential life space of the student and not only experiences that are directly related to specific subjects at hand. Kolb and Kolb (2005) suggest that supervisors 'Begin Learning with the Students' Experience of the Subject Matter' which build on what the students already know and believe based on their previous concrete experiences. This allows students to own and value their experiences as well as re-examine and change their previous understandings when new ideas are introduced.

The third educational principle in promoting positive learning experiences is called 'Creating and Holding a Hospitable Space for Learning'. This principle

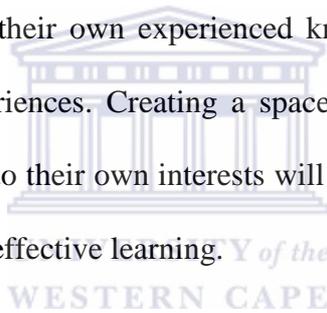
proposes that in order to learn students need to face and embrace the differences that may occur within their learning experiences. These differences may include differences between their ideas and beliefs and new ideas, or differences between their life experiences and values and those experiences and values of others. Kolb and Kolb (2005) state that when students encounter these differences they may feel challenged and threatened and supervisors should create a learning space that encourages students' expression of these differences and support them when they are faced with these challenges. Kolb and Kolb (2005) encourage supervisors to 'Make Space for Conversational Learning'. They state that meaningful learning can occur through spontaneous conversation even though it may not be the learning that the supervisors intended. Spaces for good conversation within the learning process provide the opportunity for students to reflect on their experiences and assign meaning to it which can enhance the effectiveness of experiential learning.



The fifth educational principle, called 'Making Space for Development of Expertise' was developed based on the premise that effective learning requires the ability to organise factual knowledge into a conceptual framework which students should be able to apply and transfer into different contexts. Kolb and Kolb (2005) suggest that in order to achieve this deep learning in students, supervisors should deliberately and repeatedly encourage practice in these areas. Similarly, supervisors are also encouraged to 'Make Spaces for Acting and Reflecting' as opposed to requiring students to take in only large volumes of information. Kolb and Kolb (2005, p. 208) suggest that action is the most important part of the learning cycle as it allows students to "link their inside world of reflection and

thought to the outside world of experience created by action” thereby deepening the students’ learning experience.

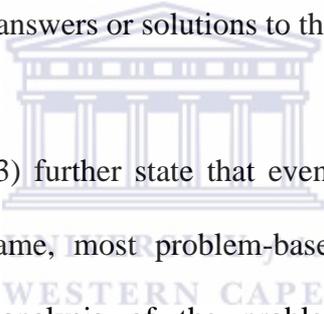
‘Making Spaces for Feeling and Thinking’, the seventh educational principle is based on the premise that students’ emotions have an influence on their reasoning which impacts on their learning and memory. Negative emotions such as fear and anxiety can inhibit learning while positive feelings such as interest and curiosity could be essential to the learning process. Kolb and Kolb (2005, p. 208) encourage supervisors to ‘Make Space for Inside-Out Learning’ which they describe as “beginning with oneself in learning”. They explain this to include students making use of their own experienced knowledge to set goals to guide their new learning experiences. Creating a space where students can link their educational experiences to their own interests will promote intrinsic motivation in the student and enhance effective learning.



The last educational principle in promoting positive learning experiences is called ‘Making Space for Students to Take Charge of Their Own Learning’. Kolb and Kolb (2005) state that if supervisors make space for students to take control of and responsibility for their own learning by allowing them to construct their own knowledge as opposed to passively receiving knowledge, the students’ ability to learn from experience will be greatly enhanced. They suggest that assisting students to understand how they learn best and giving them the skills to learn will increase the students’ capacity for self-directed learning.

2.5.3 Problem-based Learning

According to Towle and Cottrell (1996) the main assumption behind problem-based learning is that the starting point for learning should be a problem, query or challenge that the student has encountered. When presented with a problem, students should be encouraged to ask themselves questions in order to seek solutions to the problem and to increase their understanding of the underlying processes involved in that problem. Towle and Cottrell (1996) add that some of the answers the students discover come from knowledge they have previously attained while other answers will have to be researched. They assert that a supervisor's role in this process is to facilitate the students' learning process and not to provide them with answers or solutions to their problems.



Towle and Cottrell (1993) further state that even though no two problems that students face are the same, most problem-based learning situations proceed through a process of analysis of the problem, questioning the problem, formulating answers to the problem, and the application of newly acquired information to the initial problem. They assert that supervisors need to set clear learning objectives for students and should possess skills to facilitate small group discussions around the analysis and questioning of the problem. They also encourage supervisors to resist the temptation to control the direction of the discussions and to provide information rather than encourage students to seek it out for themselves as this may prevent the development of active, deep, self-directed learning.

According to Martin, Morris, Moore, Sadlo and Crouch (2004), problem-based learning within OT fieldwork education is intended to develop student satisfaction in their learning and allow students to take initiative and responsibility for their learning thereby equipping them to become lifelong learners. They assert that problem-based learning can promote confidence and independence in students which can enhance their learning within fieldwork education. It is their belief that supervisors using a problem-based learning approach during fieldwork supervision results in students who are more concerned with developing an understanding of their learning, which is characteristic of deep learning, than students who learn simply because they are required to pass.

2.5.4 Peer Learning

According to Martin and Edwards (1998), the terms peer learning and collaborative learning are used interchangeably to describe a situation in which students learn from each other rather than from their supervisor. Cohn, Dooley and Simmons (2001) provide a similar description by stating that peer learning takes place in the form of indirect teaching in which the fieldwork supervisor highlights a problem and coordinates students to solve the problems in peer groups. They add that peer learning is based on the assumption that people learn through group interaction where ideas are exchanged and individuals learn about the diversity of their own perspectives and create a unified perspective.

Within peer learning students help each other learn rather than rely on their fieldwork supervisor to direct their learning. Cohn et al., (2001) emphasise that peer learning does not de-value the role of the fieldwork supervisor but that the

role is changed to supervisors coordinating rather than directly managing students' learning. Students and supervisors are encouraged to use each other as resources by sharing the role in their learning as self-directed learners. In linking to students who help each other learn, Martin and Edwards (1998) state that the benefits of this is that students become less dependent on their fieldwork supervisor and provide more support to each other by sharing knowledge and ideas and being able to reflect on situations together. They believe that this type of interaction among students facilitates a greater depth of understanding in student learning.

According to Cohn et al., (2001) fieldwork supervisors who use a peer learning approach mostly use group tutorials which are guided by the students. The supervisor listens to the students' discussion within the tutorial asking questions only to stimulate further clinical reasoning or clarify students' observations. They add that supervisors may include minor pieces of information but that the onus of the learning process is dependent on the students collectively contributing to the knowledge base while individually constructing and developing their own learning.

2.5.5 Reflective Practice

According to Alsop (2002), reflection supports learning if thought processes begin with the association of previous experiences to current experiences through which new meanings, understandings and knowledge of a situation may occur. She states that even though learning can occur in various situations, most learning takes place through a conscious effort to engage in the learning process in which

students and practitioners have to take the initiative to learn and be open to new ideas and concepts to improve professional performance. Alsop (2002) argues that students have to be actively engaged in their experiences through the process of reflection in order for it to be transformed into meaningful learning and have educational value.

According to Alsop (2002), the stages of the process of reflection include an awareness of uncomfortable feelings and thoughts in realising that current knowledge is insufficient followed by a critical analysis of the feelings and knowledge of a situation through which new perspectives may develop. These new perspectives are then revealed in practice and learning then occurs. Similarly, Kinsella (2001, pp. 196 – 198) developed six considerations as a way for OT's to think about and develop as reflective practitioners in order to take thoughtful and meaningful action in practice. The first consideration is called 'Learning from our experiences' and highlights Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle as a method of learning and professional development. She states that if supervisors make the steps of the cycle explicit students may become more aware of what and how they learn in practice which can enhance their learning.

The second consideration is 'Ways of knowing' which Kinsella (2001) states involve professionals possessing explicit knowledge, knowledge which we can say, and implicit knowledge, knowledge which we cannot say but is revealed in action. She adds that it is vital for students and professionals to examine their actions in practice so that they can discover the implicit knowledge that influences

what is actually done in practice. This will allow students to recognise and acknowledge their limitations and assist them in choosing the wisest course of action. According to Kinsella (2001) 'Contexts of practice' is the third consideration which involves reflecting on the contextual factors of the professions' clients and communities, the contextual factors of professional practice and the factors that influence both of these. She states that the insights gained through this type of reflection provide a foundation for action in advocating for clients and changes in policy that affect communities.

The fourth consideration is 'Exploring assumptions' which Kinsella (2001) states is important to do on a regular basis as it will allow students and professionals to recognise how their assumptions influences practice. She adds that this type of reflection has the potential to raise self-awareness allowing professionals to understand their behaviours in practice. 'Theories of practice', the fifth consideration is described by Kinsella (2001) as consisting of espoused theory and theory-in-use. She states that espoused theory is based on the articulated beliefs and values of a professional while theory-in-use is contained in the professional's actions as it is reflected in what he/she does. Kinsella (2001) asserts that reflective practice requires professionals to examine their espoused theories and their theories-in-use in order to improve professional development as it requires the recognition of the need to change the espoused theory or to change professional behaviours.

The final consideration is 'Praxis' which Kinsella (2001) defines as the place where reflection and action, and theory and practice meet. She states that in order for professionals to transform and develop, they need to balance the union of reflection and action and more importantly, work from this position as OT's. Kinsella (2001) states that if reflective practice is used as an approach to professional development then it is likely to benefit both the practitioner and the clients and communities. She adds that using these considerations in practice allows professionals to move towards becoming informed, conscious reflective practitioners.

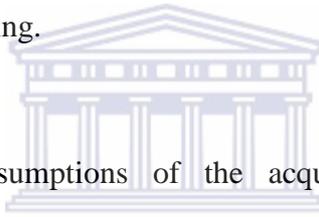
In linking with the six considerations for reflective practice, Banks, Bell and Smits (2000) state that fieldwork supervisors should include reflection and the integration of theory with practice into their fieldwork expectations for students as this will allow them to reflect on the dynamic connections between theory and practice. They add that they support the use of OT theory as a tool for thinking within reflective practice as this will allow students to develop a deeper understanding of their learning experiences.

2.5.6 The Four-Quadrant Model of Facilitated Learning

The Four-Quadrant Model (4QM) of Facilitated Learning, designed by Greber, Ziviani and Rodger (2007a) was established as a guide to assist OT's to use teaching and learning strategies as part of OT practice in order to achieve independence in skills when working with paediatric clients. However, because the model is based primarily on theories of learning, it can be utilized as an

approach which could provide supervisors with the use of teaching-learning strategies that could assist in facilitating the learning of students during fieldwork. Only strategies that are specific to fieldwork education in a community setting will be highlighted in this review.

According to Greber et al., (2007a) the foundation of the 4QM is based on the acquisitional frame of reference, a learning principle identified by developmental psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1978, as cited in Greber et al., 2007a) as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and on strategies that directly inform the student of the key aspects of the task requirements or strategies that encourage the student to consider barriers to learning.



When merging the assumptions of the acquisitional frame of reference, Vygotsky's (1978) learning principles of the ZPD and the strategies of facilitated learning, Greber et al., (2007a) identified four strategy clusters which formed the basis of the Four-Quadrant Model of Facilitated Learning (See Figure 4). Each cluster is defined by distinct learning strategies which each serve specific student needs. Quadrant 1 highlights strategies that are direct and initiated by the supervisor while strategies that are indirect yet still supervisor initiated fall into Quadrant 2. Quadrant 3 combines noticeable self-promoting strategies which are initiated by the student while Quadrant 4 is emphasized by self-regulatory strategies that are student directed but not obvious to observers.

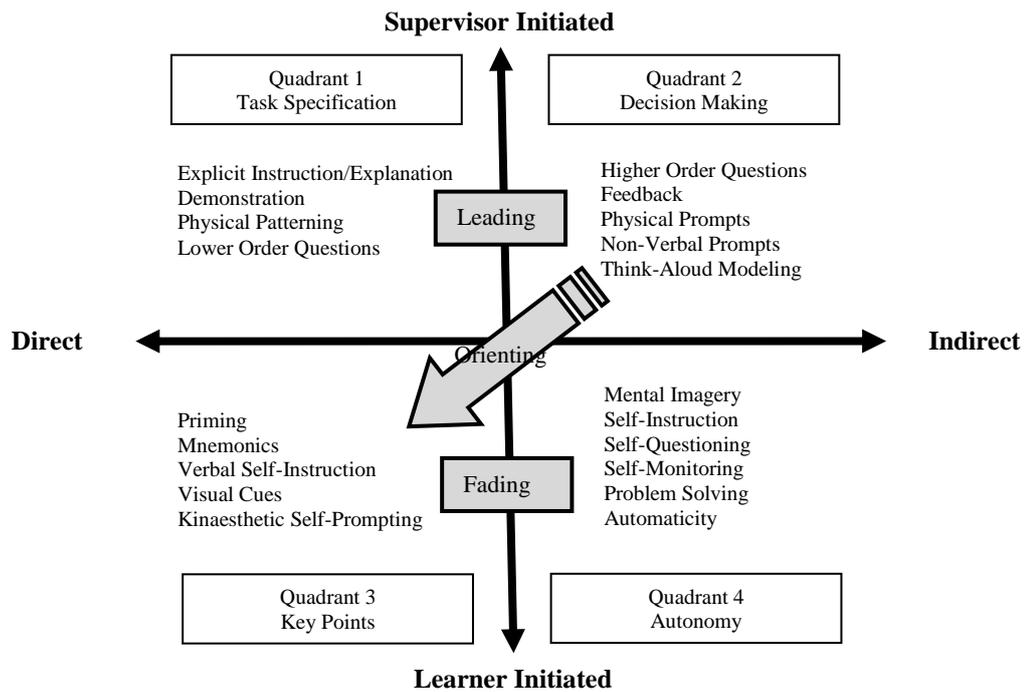


Figure 4: The Four-Quadrant Model of Facilitated Learning (Greber et al., 2007b)



2.5.6.1 Quadrant 1 – Direct, supervisor-initiated strategies

The strategies that are representative of Quadrant 1 provide the student with clear task relevant information about the requirements of a task and how it is performed. The strategies within Quadrant 1 that are applicable to fieldwork supervision in a community setting are: Explicit instruction and explanation, and Lower order questions.

Explicit instruction and explanation

This strategy provides the student with descriptions of the characteristics of the task and how it is performed. The authors (Greber et al., 2007b) suggest that the challenges that present within interpersonal communication might impose limitations on the effectiveness of this strategy and as such propose that

instructions given by supervisors need to be balanced between the use of simple language and specific content. They suggest that written or graphic instructions as well as recorded instructions through the use of audiovisual technology are different modalities through which supervisors can provide information. Greber et al., (2007b) also suggest the use of peer tutoring where fellow learners, as opposed to the supervisor, provide instruction.

Lower order questions

Greber et al., (2007b, s42) suggest that Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom, Englehart, Furst, Hill and Krathwohl, 1956, as cited in Greber et al., 2007b) is used to distinguish questions that evoke lower level processes such as recalling and understanding. They add that the term 'lower order questions' describes questions that are used to assess the students understanding of a task which allow supervisors to directly prompt previously learned material. It also allows the supervisor to engage the student in understanding what they need to do next in the learning process.

2.5.6.2 Quadrant 2 – Indirect, supervisor-initiated strategies

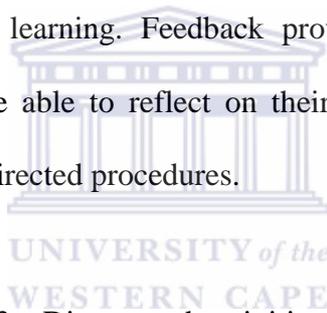
Greber et al., (2007b) state that different learning tools are necessary once a student understands what is required from a task but is unable to generate a plan in order to perform the task. The strategies characteristic of Quadrant 2 engage the student in a decision-making process and are less direct in nature even though they remain supervisor-initiated. The strategies within Quadrant 2 that are applicable to fieldwork supervision in a community setting are: Higher order questions, and Feedback.

Higher order questions

Greber et al., (2007b) suggest that higher order questions relate to the higher cognitive levels of Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom et al., 1956) such as application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. The authors (Greber et al., 2007b) state that supervisors should note that some statements are not structured as questions but would still imply the need for a response from the student.

Feedback

According to Greber et al., (2007b) feedback can take the form of verbal, gestural or symbolic information that is provided by the supervisor to critique the performance of student learning. Feedback provided by supervisors supports students so that they are able to reflect on their own performance in order to enable them to use self-directed procedures.



2.5.6.3 Quadrant 3 – Direct, student-initiated strategies

Vygotsky (1978, cited in Greber et al., (2007b, p. s43) identified a change in the students' performance that shifted from 'other-directed' to 'self-directed'. Greber et al., (2007b) state that self-direction includes student-initiated self-prompting which includes students talking to themselves and monitoring their learning progress internally. The features of their performance that students might focus on could be procedural (steps of a task), outcome focused (goal of the task), or strategy based prompts (methods related to specific performance). The strategies characteristic of Quadrant 3 are based on affective components (learning climate), cognitive strategies (formulate responses) and metacognitive strategies (monitor responses) and according to the authors (Greber et al., 2007b), are noticeable to

the supervisor. The strategies in Quadrant 3 that are applicable to fieldwork supervision in a community setting are: Mnemonics, and Visual cues.

Mnemonics

Greber et al., (2007b, p. s44) define mnemonics as associative learning strategies that enable students to increase their capacity to store and retrieve information. They add that mnemonics assist students in their ability to recall information, methods used, and specifics and steps of a task. Mnemonics include the utilization of linking words, acronyms, nonsense phrases and rhymes. These may be provided to the student by the supervisor but Greber et al., (2007b) state that it is the responsibility of the student to make use of these strategies within their learning.



Visual cues

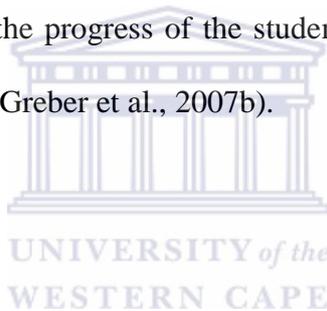
Greber et al., (2007b) state that students make use of visual cues in order to support them in recalling steps of a task or to prompt action within a task. They add that visual cues may include mind maps, graphic planners, visual displays and computer assisted instructions as well as picture cues, computer generated visual prompts and object cues.

The Four-Quadrant Model of Facilitated Learning highlights how supervisors can make use of learning strategies to influence the independence and competence of students. Greber et al., (2007b) state that it is essential that the decisions that guide the supervisor's use of these strategies be based on a thorough understanding of the characteristics of the tasks that the student needs to perform

and the learning process that leads students to acquiring the skills needed in order to perform those tasks.

The review of literature of the teaching and learning approaches used within fieldwork education emphasizes self-directed learning as an outcome within student learning which can be achieved through the use of experiential learning, problem-based learning, peer learning and reflective practice. For the purpose of this study the 4QM provides supervisors with strategies that can assist them in effectively using these approaches within fieldwork education. It also assists supervisors in selecting strategies that are based on the immediate needs of the students and evaluating the progress of the student in their process of becoming independent performers (Greber et al., 2007b).

2.6 Conclusion



In this chapter I reviewed the current issues in the literature regarding fieldwork education and supervision in the context of OT. Gaps in the literature were identified regarding the most effective supervisory model in a community setting and which supervisory styles and techniques would best facilitate students' learning in a non-traditional placement. In order to address this, literature around teaching and learning approaches utilized as part of OT education and practice were also reviewed.

In addition, literature regarding community development and community based OT practice as well as occupation-based practice was also highlighted. The

following chapter discusses the methodological framework used throughout the research process which includes the research design and a description of the research setting.

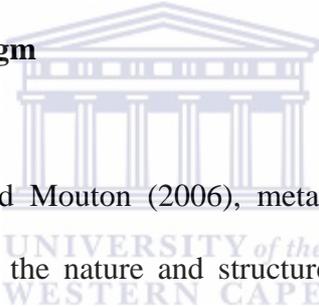


CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In Chapter 3 the methodological design and paradigm utilised in this study is discussed. The chapter highlights the research approach, a description of the research setting, participant selection, data collection and analysis as well as the ethical considerations of the study. This study followed an interpretivist paradigm with a qualitative research methodological approach and a phenomenological design.

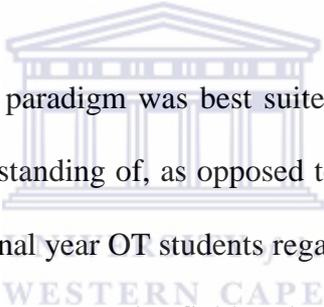
3.1 Research Paradigm



According to Babbie and Mouton (2006), meta-theoretical reflection typically addresses issues such as the nature and structure of scientific theories and the meaning of truth, explanation and objectivity. They add that a meta-theory can typically be defined as the philosophy and epistemology of science, identified as schools of thought which are critical reflections on the nature of scientific enquiry. The three most influential meta-theoretical traditions or schools of thought are positivism, interpretivism and critical theory.

This research study is situated in an interpretivist research paradigm with the emphasis on the participants' experiences and the researcher's interpretation thereof. Interpretive research is fundamentally concerned with the meaning that people assign to the interpretations of their continuously changing worlds (Babbie & Mouton, 2006). Babbie and Mouton (2006) assert that an interpretivist view of

social reality is that there are multiple realities and that truth is experienced and created subjectively through the phenomena being studied. They state that the key characteristics of such a study are that the focus is on the meaning derived from the lived experiences of the participants, as well as the process that they have experienced. The aim of an interpretivist study is to understand the complexity of the phenomena, not to generalize about it. In contrast, Henning (2004) states that researchers who adopt a positivist paradigm believe that the goal is to describe, explain or predict the phenomena experienced, whereas those using a critical theory paradigm question the political nature of the phenomena by examining the processes of gaining, maintaining and circulating existing power relationships.



As such an interpretivist paradigm was best suited for this study as the purpose was to gain a deep understanding of, as opposed to a description of or an inquiry into, the experiences of final year OT students regarding the fieldwork supervision they received during their community fieldwork placement. This study explores, from the perspective of the students, their perception of how supervision contributed towards an understanding of occupation-based community practice. An interpretive paradigm allowed me to develop a platform to interpret and understand, from the students' perspectives, their learning experiences during their community fieldwork block as well as how the various supervision styles and methods utilized contributed towards their learning about occupation-based community practice.

3.2 Research Approach

According to Henning (2004), the three theoretical paradigms of positivism, interpretivism and critical theory, inform a specific methodological approach in a logical and coherent manner. An interpretivist paradigm would presuppose a qualitative approach which is defined as being multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). If the purpose of a research study is to examine phenomena as they unfold in real world situations, without manipulation, then an inductive, qualitative approach is required (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Furthermore, Babbie and Mouton (2006) state that the qualitative research process is mostly inductive in approach which results in the production of new theories. They add that the main aim of qualitative research is to develop an understanding of social action within a specific environment rather than attempting to generalize within a broader population. Quantitative research, in contrast, begins with a series of predetermined categories which are usually embodied in standardized quantitative measures which are used to make broad and generalized comparisons (Durrheim, 2006).

Whiteford (2005) suggests that qualitative research provides thorough evidence relevant to OT practice as this type of research focuses on participants' own perspectives, views and experiences. She goes on to explain that this relevance to OT practice is due to the fact that qualitative research usually occurs in a natural environment and as such recognizes the importance of understanding experiences in context, which is a vital component of the OT profession. This is evident in this study as I gained an in-depth understanding of final year OT students' learning

experiences in the context of their community fieldwork placement. Qualitative research was therefore best suited to this study as the focus is on the feelings, perspectives, views and experiences of final year OT students regarding their supervision in their natural environment of community fieldwork practice.

3.3 Research Design

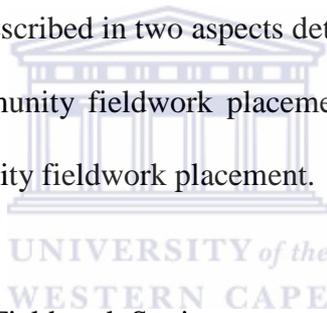
Researchers using a qualitative approach would most likely employ research designs such as symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, hermeneutics and ethnomethodology (Henning, 2004). Applied research in occupational therapy adopts a phenomenological perspective when the intervention is studied from the perspective of the participants' experience (McLaughlin Gray, 1997). According to Lindegger (2006) phenomenology is concerned with human existence and the manner in which phenomena are experienced. The challenge for the researcher is to describe the lived world of participants and the temporal, spatial and interpersonal characteristics that define it. These characteristics are comprised of an outward appearance and an internal consciousness which is based on memory, image and meaning (Creswell, 1998).

In relation to this study, a phenomenological design would assist me to understand the essence of the experience of community fieldwork for final year students while a grounded theory design would develop a theory grounded in data from the field and an ethnographic study design would provide a description of the students and their environment. Based on this, a phenomenological design was appropriate for this study as the phenomena being researched was the supervision of final year

OT students during their community fieldwork placement from the student participants' perspectives and lived experiences. It was envisaged that the use of the phenomenological design would ultimately allow me to assist OT educators and fieldwork supervisors in facilitating occupation-based practice in communities through exploring the 2009 final year OT students' experiences of their fieldwork supervision and how this contributed towards their learning about occupation-based community practice.

3.4 Research Setting

The research setting is described in two aspects detailing a thorough description of the context of the community fieldwork placement setting and the structure of fieldwork in the community fieldwork placement.



3.4.1 The Community Fieldwork Setting

The 2009 final year OT students completed their community fieldwork placement in a rural community situated in the Western Cape approximately 150 km east of the city of Cape Town. Based on the needs assessment compiled by the final year OT students as part of their fieldwork requirements, the estimated population of this community is 5200 with the majority of the population (56%) comprised of children, adolescents and younger adults and the minority comprised of the middle aged (29%) to older age groups (15%). The community relies mostly on subsistence farming as it has a very high rate of unemployment and poverty is rife. Very few resources are available to the community. Amongst these are one primary and one high school, one community clinic, one general store, a library

and a police station. The majority of community members that are formally employed, work in the surrounding areas of the community. The rest of the community are employed as seasonal workers on the surrounding farms. No available recreational facilities and no existing public transportation system are available in the community.

The priority needs identified by the final year OT students placed in this community include a high rate of leisure boredom especially amongst adolescents which leads to risk taking behaviour. This results in a high teenage pregnancy rate, alcohol and drug abuse, and a high school dropout rate amongst the adolescents. The young children take on adult roles by looking after their younger siblings due to parents working long hours on farms for minimum wages. A substantial amount of alcohol abuse occurs amongst adults which results in spousal abuse and child neglect. General lack of awareness around disability and mental health issues in the community is also evident. Due to the societal needs that exist in the community, it has been identified by organisations and international projects as an ideal placement to provide intervention. However, due to the nature of the intervention provided, the community members have become accustomed to 'receiving help' as opposed to being 'helped to do'. This has affected the community's capacity and motivation to participate in community projects reducing the potential of sustainability of these projects. For example, after the initial assessment of the community in which they identified their needs and indicated their willingness to participate in their selected project, the community expected the students to plan and implement the project. This was contradictory to the approach that the students took which was to facilitate the

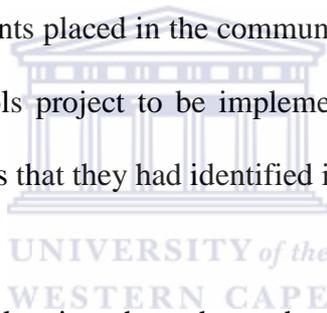
community to plan, implement and sustain their own project. Therefore, even though the community was very welcoming and receptive towards the students living in their community and working with them, maintaining community participation and involvement in the project was the greatest challenge for the students.

3.4.2 Fieldwork Structure

As mentioned earlier, the UWC Community Process (refer to Chapter 1) takes place over the duration of the year with certain groups of students responsible for certain phases of the Community Process (See Figure 2). A total of fifteen (five students per term/phase) were placed in the community in 2009, all supervised by the researcher. Each phase is approximately seven weeks long and during this time students are provided with accommodation (a house) and are required to live in the community for the duration of their fieldwork placement. The students depart for the community on a Sunday and return to Cape Town on a Thursday. Students are also invited by the site coordinator to spend a weekend in the community so that they are able to experience the community over a weekend. Even though as the supervisor, I have previously spent time in the community due to the prior supervision of students, I meet with the site coordinator before each group of students arrive and re-establish connections with the key members of the community in order to reinforce the partnership between the UWC OT department and the community. On the day of their arrival in the community, the students in each phase are met by their site coordinator who is a community member and who acts as the gatekeeper to facilitate the student's access into the community. The

site coordinator spends the first week verbally and physically orientating the students to the community.

During the assessment phase the students (group 1) are required to interact with and experience the community in order to gather the information required for the needs assessment. Students are introduced to the key members and organisations within the community by the site coordinator and spend the majority of their time engaging and forming relationships with ‘the man on the street’. Based on the analysis of the needs of the community and in collaboration with the target group selected for intervention, a project is proposed. This collaboration allowed the 2009 final year OT students placed in the community to propose the initiation of a Health Promoting Schools project to be implemented in the primary schools in order to address the needs that they had identified in the community.



During the intervention planning phase the students (group 2) are required to plan the intervention of the project in collaboration with the target group of community members. The planning requires the students to be aware of and access the resources, material and human, available to the community and put structures in place for the implementation of the project. During the third term, in which the final year students are engaged in their research module (refer to Chapter 1), the collective group (group 1, 2 and 3) return to the community once a week to begin the implementation of the project. In the analysis phase (group 3) the students are required to continue to facilitate the implementation of the project in collaboration with the target group community members. During this phase the students also

analyze the implementation of the project in order to evaluate the impact and change it had on the community.

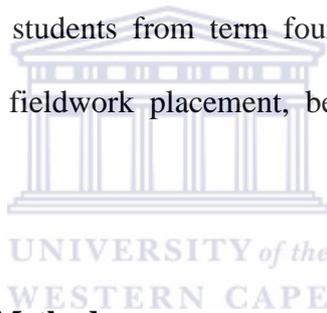
During the yearlong community fieldwork placement, students in each phase are expected to submit daily reflective journals, meet the practical and written deadlines of the Community Process and engage with the community and its members in practically implementing an occupation-based project. The students are evaluated at the end of each phase by their supervisor based on their academic understanding and practical performance of the Community Process. In addition students are required to do a case presentation in which they highlight the skills they acquired during their community fieldwork placement and develop a portfolio file which highlights their overall professional development during the Community Process.



3.5 Participant Selection

Creswell (1998) defines sampling as the selection of research participants based on decisions made by the researcher about which people, what settings, events, behaviours and social processes they would like to observe. He states that the intention of sampling is to select a sample of participants that are representative of a certain population that the researcher aims to draw conclusions about. A research sample can be selected on the basis of the researchers “own knowledge of the population, its elements and the nature of the research aims” (Babbie & Mouton, 2006, p. 166). Creswell (1998) asserts that research concerned with detailed and in-depth analysis rather than statistical accuracy does not draw on

large or random samples and as such various types of purposeful sampling may be used. He adds that in a phenomenological study it is essential that all participants experience the phenomenon being studied which in this case, is fieldwork supervision. Purposeful sampling was therefore used to recruit participants for this study. The inclusion criteria were that participants had to be final year UWC OT undergraduate students; who had undergone their community fieldwork placement in a specific community; and who were supervised by the researcher. The fifteen (15) students who met these criteria were invited to participate in the study. Two students from each group/phase (Refer to 3.4.2 Fieldwork Structure) volunteered. As a result, two 2009 UWC final year OT students from term one, two students from term two and two students from term four who were supervised by me during their community fieldwork placement, became the participants for this study.



3.6 Data Collection Methods

According to Kelly (2006), qualitative researchers want to make sense of feelings, experiences, social situations, or phenomena as they occur in the real world. It is therefore central to qualitative research to work with data in context. Based on this premise, all the data utilised in this study was part of the requirements of the fieldwork component of the final year students' undergraduate program and was directly linked to their experiences and perceptions of their learning in their community fieldwork placement. As a secondary data source, which is data that is already in existence and is accessed by the researcher, the data utilised in the study was not produced by students for the sole purpose of this research but can

be used to explore students experiences and perceptions of their learning during community fieldwork. It was requested of the six 2009 final year OT students that their daily reflective fieldwork journals and their portfolio files from their community fieldwork placement be used as data sources for the study. In addition, an evaluative focus group (Refer to 3.6.3 Evaluative Focus Group) that was held at the end of the year by a senior staff member (not the researcher) was also used as a data source for the study. The methods of data collection that was used in the study were retrospectively collected and therefore include the reflective journals and the portfolio files as the primary source of data, and the evaluative focus group as an additional source to elaborate on the students' fieldwork experiences.

3.6.1 Reflective Journals

Reflective journaling is used as an on-going, personalized account of students' experiences, feelings and subjective insights gained during the developmental process of becoming a health practitioner (Primeau, 2003). Students' writing about their work is an opportunity for them to clarify their work, develop critical thinking and objectify progress in their professional reasoning and learning (Duncan & Buchanan, 2006). Reflective journaling is a requirement of the undergraduate OT education program at UWC that is used predominantly with students who are undergoing a fieldwork component of the program. As a result the final year students are required to write daily reflective journals during their fieldwork placements to demonstrate their learning and professional development.

The reflective journals of the two final year OT students selected from term one, the two students selected from term two and the two students selected from term

four were used in this study. These reflective journals provided me with the six student participants' views, feelings and perspectives of their learning related to the Community Process, community development and occupation-based practice. The reflective journals were a valuable data source as they contained the students' immediate learning experiences during the community fieldwork placement.

3.6.2 Portfolio Files

According to Duncan and Joubert (2006) portfolios may be constructed by self-selecting and motivating a collection of extracts from a cycle of actions taken or interventions made during a fieldwork period. The purpose is to provide evidence of longitudinal professional development and learning based on reflection in hindsight. In the UWC OT undergraduate program, portfolio files are used as a method of assessing the knowledge students have acquired, the skills they have developed as well as their ability to integrate theory into practice during their fieldwork practice. Portfolio files are thus comprised of student narratives of their fieldwork placement experiences. The 2009 final year OT students compiled portfolios to illustrate their professional growth and learning over the seven week duration of their fieldwork placement. These portfolio files as such contain students' deeper reflections on their learning experiences as they look back on their fieldwork placements.

The portfolio files of the two final year OT students selected from term one, the two students selected from term two and the two students selected from term four were used in this study. As a data source the portfolio files provided me with the six final year OT students' views, feelings and perspectives of their learning

related to the Community Process, community development and occupation-based practice. The portfolio files were a valuable data source as they contained the students' own insights about their learning experiences as they were compiled after the completion of the community fieldwork placement.

3.6.3 Evaluative Focus Group

A focus group is typically a group of people who share a similar type of experience and are often selected to reflect a diverse cross section of interests and attitudes (Kelly, 2006) which provide direct evidence about similarities and differences in the participants' opinions and experiences (Babbie & Mouton, 2006). As part of the community fieldwork component of the UWC OT undergraduate program, an evaluative focus group is held with the entire final year class at the end of each year by a senior staff member of the department (not the researcher). The purpose of the group is to evaluate the process that the final year students had undergone during their community fieldwork placements. The video recording of the evaluative focus group was transcribed verbatim for the purpose of this research. As the aim of the focus group with the final year students at the end of each year is to evaluate not only their learning experiences but also how supervision contributed towards this learning, this data source provided insights into the students' experiences of how supervision styles utilised contributed towards their understanding of occupation-based community practice.

3.7 Data Analysis

According to Curtin and Fossey (2007), the purpose of interpretive analysis is to provide a thick description of the context and environment in which the phenomenon takes place so that the meaning and importance of the phenomena may be fully understood. The 2009 final year OT students' reflective journals, their portfolio files as well as the transcribed evaluative focus group were analysed according to the following steps as suggested by Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Kelly (2006). These steps included:

- (i) Gaining an initial understanding of the data by the reading and re-reading of the text.

As a clinical teaching coordinator (supervisor), I was exposed to the data through marking the students' reflective fieldwork journals, guiding them in their portfolio files as well as viewing the evaluative focus group video tape. This provided me with an introductory understanding to the meaning of the data. The reflective journals, portfolio files and the transcribed evaluative focus group were then read through twice in order to allow me as the researcher to become more familiar with the data.

- (ii) Marking codes in terms of phrases, lines, sentences or paragraphs that might refer to a central idea, explanation or event.

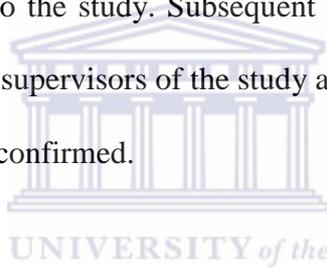
During this stage the reflective journals, portfolio files and the transcribed evaluative focus group were coded by identifying lines, sentences or paragraphs that were related to the objectives of the study. Codes that were similar in meaning were highlighted using specific colours.

- (iii) Clustering coded material together to create categories and further analysing each cluster in relation to another.

The colour coded data from the reflective journals, portfolio files and transcribed evaluative focus group were clustered together into groups that held similar meanings. The groups were then further analysed and those that were relatively similar were collapsed together.

- (iv) Grouping the clusters into the central themes of the research study.

The coded groups that resulted from the data were clustered together to form central themes relevant to the study. Subsequent to a discussion of the resulting themes with the research supervisors of the study and a re-analysis of the clustered groups, the themes were confirmed.



- (v) Exploring the themes and interpreting the analysis.

During the interpretation of the analysis the thematic categories were used as sub-headings. The interpretation of the data provides a written account of the phenomenon being studied which is elaborated upon in Chapter 4.

The use of these steps for data analysis concur with the description of a phenomenological data analysis which states that analysis proceeds through the methodology of reduction, the analysis of specific statements and a search for all possible meanings (Creswell, 1998, p.52).

3.8 Trustworthiness

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the key principle of good qualitative research is found in the notion of trustworthiness. Babbie and Mouton (2006) indicate that the principles of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability ensure trustworthiness in qualitative studies. They add that a qualitative study cannot be considered trustworthy unless it is credible.

To ensure credibility in this study, method and data triangulation were used. Triangulation as a verification procedure can be used whereby multiple and different data sources can be used to substantiate evidence from different sources to shed light on a theme or perspective (Creswell, 1998). In this study, method and data triangulation were achieved through the reflective fieldwork journals of the 2009 final year OT students who were placed in a community setting for their fieldwork placement, their portfolio files, as well as the end of the year evaluative focus group.

Van der Riet and Durrheim (2006) state that transferability is achieved by producing detailed and rich descriptions of contexts. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest the strategies of thick description and purposive sampling to ensure transferability. In this study a thick description was achieved by collecting detailed descriptions of the students' fieldwork experiences through their reflective journals, their portfolio files and through the evaluative focus group as well as by giving a detailed account of the fieldwork context to allow the reader to make their own judgements on the transferability of the study. Purposeful

sampling was also employed in this study as all participants were required to have experienced community fieldwork supervision which is the phenomena being studied. This resulted in a range of context specific information from a variety of participants.

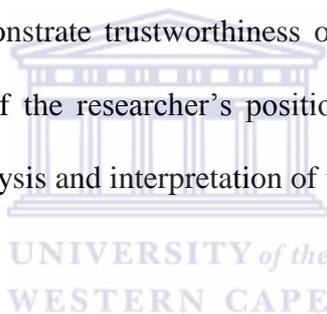
Babbie and Mouton (2006) state that if a research study were to be repeated with the same or similar participants in the same or similar context, that the research findings would be similar, or dependable. Dependability is achieved through rich and detailed descriptions that show how the researchers' actions and opinions are rooted in and stem from the context of the study (Van der Riet & Durrheim, 2006). This links to confirmability in that this is the degree to which the findings of the study are the focus of the research process. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest the use of an audit trail to ensure dependability and confirmability of a study. It is for this reason that a record of the research process and the data analysis trail was kept during this study.

3.9 Reflexivity

According to Curtin and Fossey (2007), reflexivity is defined as the researcher's direct acknowledgement that he/she is actively involved within the research process thereby influencing the development of the research study. They add that it is vital for researchers to be clear and aware of their own personal biases, assumptions and values in relation to the phenomenon being studied. To ensure reflexivity within this study it is important to note that as a researcher my

background as the fieldwork supervisor of the 2009 final year OT students in a community setting may have influenced the development of this research study.

In attempting to ensure that the findings of this study are reflective of the students' perspectives and experiences of fieldwork supervision in a community setting rather than my perspectives as their fieldwork supervisor, a description of my supervision practices (Refer to Chapter 1) and a description of the research setting in this chapter has been provided. According to Primeau (2003), reflexivity in the form of an account consists of narratives or introspective material which can be included into the introductory chapters of the study or within the method section in order to demonstrate trustworthiness of the study. She adds that this displays an awareness of the researcher's position in the study and provides a context in which the analysis and interpretation of the data can be understood.



In addition to the reflexive accounts the researcher made use of bracketing and peer debriefing as strategies that provide evidence of reflexivity in this study. Within the phenomenological approach, bracketing is used as an approach where the researcher brackets his/her own preconceived ideas about the phenomenon being studied in order to understand it from the perspectives of the participants (Creswell, 1998). The process of bracketing as a means of reflexivity was incorporated through constant feedback and discussions with supervisors. In relation to this I was required to reflect on my role and experience of being a fieldwork supervisor in a community setting in order to examine my reasons for exploring the 2009 final year OT students' experiences of fieldwork supervision in the community. This allowed me to consider my views and position within the

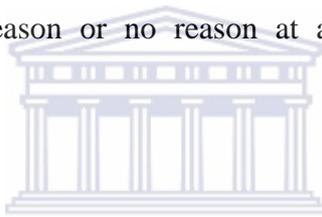
research process and to separate my subjective experience of fieldwork supervision within a community setting from that of the participants of the study.

According to Babbie and Mouton (2006), peer debriefing takes place with colleagues who are not directly involved in the study but have a general understanding of the nature of the study. These peers should be in the position to ask questions, provide assistance in decision making and discuss perceptions, insights and analyses with the researcher. Henning (2004, p. 148) states that validation is a process of checking, questioning, theorising, discussing and sharing research actions with peers as a 'critical in-process review' in order to ensure quality and evidence of good research practice. Peer debriefing was achieved through consultation and communication with peers regarding the data analysis and conclusions of this study. Sections of the research study were also presented to the staff of the OT department at UWC for discussion and critique which provided me with insights into the study and enabled me to validate my conclusions.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

In this study, the ethical principles of autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence as well as informed written consent were followed. Ethical approval and permission for the study to be conducted was requested from the Faculty and Senate Higher Degrees Committees of the University of the Western Cape. Once approval and permission was obtained, the six 2009 final year students were selected, and were informed about the aim, purpose and process of the study through a written letter

(See appendix B). The students were informed that their participation was voluntary and that those willing to participate in the study would need to give written consent (See appendix C). In addition, all students that were supervised by me in a community setting in 2009 were approached regarding permission to use data obtained from the evaluative focus group held at the end of that year. Every precaution was taken to respect the privacy of the participants and to maintain the confidentiality of personal information. In addition pseudonyms were used to protect any information that may have been disclosed about interactions with the community and/or clients within their reflective journals or within the evaluative focus group. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason or no reason at all, without loss of benefit or penalisation.



As with the principle of beneficence, the findings of this research study will be made available to the students, past and present, of the OT department at UWC. The information obtained from this study will be distributed to the broader OT community through professional development events and academic publications. Most importantly, the UWC OT department would be able to use the findings of this study to enhance the opportunities for occupation-based community practice within the undergraduate OT training program.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter provided a systematic account of the methodological procedure that was used in this study. A description and rationale of the use of a qualitative approach and phenomenological design was provided followed by a thick description of the research setting. An explanation of the participant selection and data collection methods was presented followed by the methodological steps used to analyse the data provided on the students' experiences of fieldwork supervision during their community fieldwork placement. Matters regarding the trustworthiness of the study and ethical considerations were also discussed.



CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Chapter 4 provides a description of the key findings of the analysis of the 2009 final year OT students' reflective journals, their portfolio files and the transcribed evaluative focus group. This analysis aimed to identify thematic categories related to the 2009 final year OT students' experiences of fieldwork supervision during their community fieldwork placement. The description of the thematic categories address the 2009 final year OT students' feelings about their community fieldwork experience, their perceptions about their learning related to community focussed OT and occupation based community practice and their experiences of the various supervision styles and methods they were exposed to. Due to the retrospective nature of the data sources, the findings of the study are not specifically centred on the students' perceptions and experiences of supervision styles and methods used within their community fieldwork placement. The following table represents the themes and their categories that emerged from the analysis of the data:

Table 1: Themes and Categories

Themes	Categories
Theme 1 – The Interpersonal Aspects of the Fieldwork Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is how I feel • ‘Separating the personal from the professional’ • ‘Doing things we never thought we were capable of’
Theme 2 – Becoming Part of the Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The power of community entry • With all the issues, what is the priority?
Theme 3 – The Big Word ‘Occupation’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breaking it down – Task, Activity and Occupation • Making the concept [occupation] bigger • ‘Occupationalizing’ what we have to do
Theme 4 – The ‘Fundamental’ Aspects of Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making abstract concepts simple • That personal touch • That thing called theory • Reading, reflecting and more reading

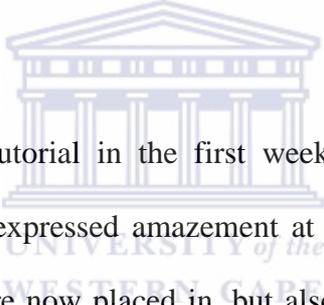
4.1 Theme 1 – The Interpersonal Aspects of the Fieldwork Experience

This theme focuses on the interpersonal aspects of the students’ experiences during their community fieldwork placement. It highlights their feelings regarding their fieldwork experiences and their growth and development on a personal and professional level. This theme also addresses the challenges the students faced in separating their personal selves from their professional roles as well as how the students felt about the outcomes of their personal and professional growth. The categories in this theme are: This is how I feel; Separating the personal from the professional; and Doing things we never thought we were capable of.

4.1.1 This is how I feel.

As exciting as the concept of a fieldwork placement away from home was for the students, being placed in an unfamiliar environment, in an unfamiliar house, with fellow students who were not necessarily familiar to them, left the students feeling somewhat vulnerable, scared, lonely and fearful. One student felt concerned that she would be the odd one out.

“I am naturally reserved and ‘me time’ is an integral part of me as it gives me a chance to reflect. As a result I do not like noise. My biggest worry was how I was going to get along with my colleagues. The fear of being the odd one out really plagued me.” – Student 1, Journal



During the orientation tutorial in the first week of the community fieldwork placement, the students expressed amazement at the natural beauty of the rural community that they were now placed in, but also that they were nervous about what to expect from the community members. Students also felt that being new in a community elicited feelings of anxiety and fear because of the unknown. They however felt, based on their previous fieldwork experiences, that in order to overcome that fear they should make themselves known in the community.

“Being new in a community brings a feeling of anxiety and fear because you don’t know whether or not it’s dangerous to be in a certain place / time or how people of the community will respond to you, but from previous experience in a community I know / have learnt that you should get yourself known in the community in order to overcome that fear.” – Student 5, Journal

Some students who started their community fieldwork placement in the last phase (term 4) felt that completing the community project was too great a responsibility for them to handle. Their anxiety was related to feelings of negativity and despondency and generally feeling overwhelmed by the task that lay ahead of them.

“I started my community block with fear, anxiety and deep concern as I felt that the responsibility of completing the project was too much for me to handle.” –

Student 6, Journal

An aspect of the fears and anxieties that students experienced was related to the fieldwork learning structure that presented itself in a community fieldwork placement. Because there are no OT role models present or set guidelines as to what they had to do in a community, they found that it was very different to the fieldwork structure they experienced when working in hospitals or institutions.

“Thinking about it now, it appears as if I am in a different sort of world because I am so use to the structure back at university and being in individual and group practical blocks.” – Student 2, Journal

Students however used the difference between the learning structure of a community placement and an institutional placement to explore how it could promote change within themselves not only personally but professionally. They also looked at how the challenges that result from this difference in fieldwork placements will enhance their knowledge of the OT profession. This lead to more positive feelings of excitement and enthusiasm in getting to know themselves

better and to learn more about the role of the OT within the different fieldwork context.

“Even though I am only beginning to experience this world of community, I’m already starting to think how it’s going to change me, not only professionally, but personally as well. I think new challenges are definitely going to emerge, and strong and weak points will reflect, but I am excited to get to know myself in this new world and how it’s going to enrich my knowledge of the profession of OT.” – Student 2, Journal

With all the fears and anxieties that students experienced in the beginning of their community fieldwork placement, they were still able to explore their own aspirations for the placement.

“I did not come here just to finish my block and attain a pass, these are people’s lives I plan on having a positive impact on and I would have to do it the right way.” – Student 4, Journal

As the students’ time spent in the community fieldwork placement increased so did their learning. This experience for the students resulted in them feeling overwhelmed with the amount of learning that they began to realise was required during this process.

“There are so many things to see and so many links to be made and I feel overwhelmed at the amount of ground I still need to cover.” Student 3, Journal

Other students felt overwhelmed with their own personal challenges. One student describes how she experienced a language barrier and how she was anxious yet eager to overcome that barrier.

“The whole time I was worried about the fact that I could not communicate in Afrikaans and the people will not be able to understand me.” Student 1, Portfolio

In an attempt to make her learning experiences more meaningful by communicating with the community members regardless of the language barrier, she felt appreciative of her fellow students who allowed her to direct the conversation, and who complimented her on making the effort to do so.

“My desire to be able to communicate with the community members and find out from them what their experience of the community is, was finally becoming a reality. It was a beautiful experience indeed.” – Student 1, Journal

Students expressed that even though they were not able to completely grasp certain concepts regarding their learning about community focussed OT within tutorials, their own willingness to learn was a very important factor in their personal and professional development. This made them feel good about taking responsibility for their own learning.

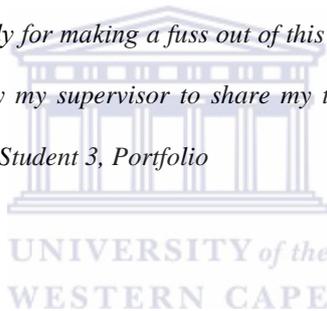
“There is nothing wrong with feeling lost, as long as I try to clarify concepts to myself. It makes me feel good to know that I’ve pursued/thought about something that has never crossed my mind before.” – Student 3, Journal

The students became excited about developing their own understandings of concepts. This resulted in students becoming eager to learn and the subsequent feelings of accomplishment in their learning.

“I’ve never felt more enthusiastic to learn and my ah-ha moments make me feel good about what I’m learning.” – Student 4, Journal

Students highlighted that sharing their thoughts and ideas with each other in tutorials made them feel proud about what they had learnt and the progress they were making.

“Sometimes I feel silly for making a fuss out of this but I felt so proud of myself when I was asked by my supervisor to share my thoughts with everyone else during a tutorial.” – Student 3, Portfolio



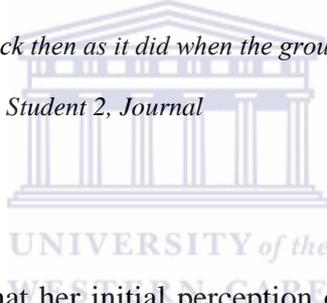
4.1.2 Separating the personal from the professional.

One of the biggest personal challenges the students faced was when it was brought to their attention by their supervisor that they were being judgemental towards the community. Through discussions with their supervisor and through their reflective journaling the students’ comments regarding the community came across as negative, disapproving and presumptuous. Most students were hurt because they were unable to see how they were being judgemental.

“Then my supervisor spoke to me through my journal feedback. I was upset that she thought I was judgemental. Me, judgemental? How could someone say that I was judgemental?” – Student 1, Portfolio

Once it was explained to the students how they were being judgemental and that they had to conceptualise the community according to a theoretical model such as the Person Environment Occupation Model, some of them developed an understanding of this concept. However only once they linked this information to a practical experience they had, did they truly understand.

“During our tutorial about theory with Nikki on Monday she mentioned that in our previous reflections we came across as judgemental towards certain people or groups that we met in the community. We spoke about the PEO model and Nikki mentioned that we need to take into consideration the person, environment as well as occupation before we can make assumptions about people. This appeared like a reasonable and understandable critique to make but it didn’t really click then as it did when the group sat in on a life orientation class for Grade 9.” – Student 2, Journal



One student expressed that her initial perception of the youth of this community was that they were lazy because they had no interest in farming even though the community is predominantly a farming community. These experiences allowed students to reflect on their own personal feelings and insights with regards to working in the community.

“After sitting down and really analysing this information, I began to wonder why my supervisor said I was judgemental. I realised that the occupation of farming may be meaningful to the elderly, however to the youth it remains but an activity with a purpose but devoid of meaning.” – Student 1, Portfolio

For other students a discussion of their experiences within the community allowed them to realise their perceptions about the community and how they were being judgemental.

“Only after speaking about what that experience was like did I realise that I was being judgemental. Given my tertiary education and the field of study I specialise in, you’d think that I’d have more empathy towards the youth of the community. Only then did I realise that I had no right to be so judgemental.” – Student 4, Journal

In a student’s experience of the youth of the community standing on the street corners, they assumed that the youth had nothing to do. When this assumption was challenged by their supervisor, the student realised that her perception of leisure was based on her own experiences and knowledge and not on the experiences of the youth in the community.

“I found it amazing that I know a lot of words, but in actual fact I don’t ‘know’ them. I have a lot of book knowledge, but inadequate experiential knowledge.” – Student 1, Journal

Through feedback provided to students, they felt that they were able to experience reflective moments related to their own personal development.

“The comment Nikki made about my reflections in the second week, it gave me insight into how my mind works and I was surprised that it could be seen in how I do things. I tend to think of many things at once and because she made that comment, I was able to reflect on why my thoughts are all over the place.” – Student 4, Portfolio

Students felt that it was important to link their personal development to their professional development as the one has an impact on the other.

“Hearing the comments Nikki made about the other students communicating with the people of the community, it made me worry about how I’m progressing and I don’t think I’m faring very well. When it comes to meeting people I’m very introverted and my small talk is therefore non-existent. I feel that I need to step out of that little corner and start speaking openly. Only then will I make my profession and myself known.” – Student 4, Journal

Of the reflective moments that the students had during their community fieldwork placement, the most profound experience for them was the realisation that even though they are the ones doing the studying and as such hold all the knowledge, they are not the experts in this community, the community members are. Students expressed that letting go of that perspective was somewhat challenging.

“As a student it has been very difficult for me to understand how I cannot be the expert when I have been to school and have all the scientific knowledge about human development, psychology and human occupation. It is often very difficult to relinquish that ‘power’.” – Student 1, Journal

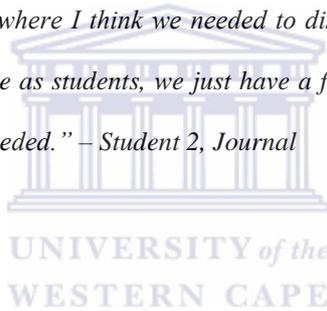
Some of the experiences that students faced were not only challenging but heart wrenching. Students described their experiences of the effects of poverty in the community on the children, the impact of substance abuse on families and the stigma attached to people with disabilities and how these experiences led them to feel powerless at not being able to ‘fix’ these problems. The students expressed

being conflicted about whether to respond to these situations from a personal or a professional perspective.

“I felt this longing to help them. My heart broke with every word of hardship. I kept trying to remind myself of the purpose of my visit and my role as a professional.” – Student 4, Journal

Even though the students’ initial reaction was always that of wanting to provide assistance where needed, through discussions and reading, the students learnt that there were different ways in which to approach these situations.

“This was the point where I think we needed to distinguish between sympathy and empathy, because as students, we just have a feeling of always wanting to help where we are needed.” – Student 2, Journal



The students felt that the biggest lesson learnt when working in a community was that, all their focus, both personal and professional, should be on the community and not on their own personal interpretation thereof.

“That’s what I thought was important, to have the passion and the motivation to do this thing, to make it happen, but Nikki made me realise that passion and motivation is great, but that it needs to be about the community and not about me.” – Student 6, Journal

Even though students came to understand this concept, they did feel that the process at times was a demanding one in which it was sometimes difficult to separate their personal selves from their professional ones.

“What I’ve learnt is that through the process of community entry and really becoming part of the community, one really also gives a lot of yourself and that being a health professional is hard work, because one cannot deny that each person has their values and beliefs and sometimes it’s really difficult to separate the personal from the professional.” – Student 2, Journal

4.1.3 Doing things we never thought we were capable of.

Students felt that being placed and living together in the community was an act of faith by their department in their ability to do a good job. This, they felt, made them feel capable of doing things that they never thought they were capable of.

“When you are left on your own in a community and someone more knowledgeable than you are trusts you to do a good job, I think that it shows respect for us as students and prospective OT’s. It actually makes us do things we never thought we are capable of doing.” – Student 1, Portfolio

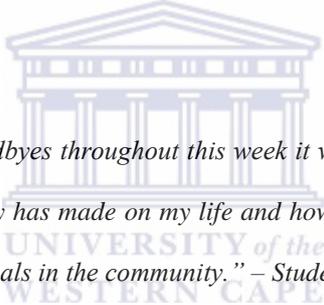
In reflecting about their community fieldwork placement, students highlighted the personal change in themselves that they have experienced as well as new developments that had arisen.

“As I think about my first day stepping into a house that was unknown and 4 girls which I only knew by name and face, I must say I’ve come a long way from feeling vulnerable, scared and lonely, to feeling satisfied, independent and confident. This experience has been amazing because I became a community member, met new people, made new friends, adopted new habits and discovered things about myself that others knew but I didn’t.” – Student 3, Journal

Some students highlighted specifically the personal impact the community fieldwork placement had on them by living in the community and having their own space in which to develop.

“The past 6 weeks has taught me a lot about tolerating others who has different views than mine. It has taught me emotional restraint in order to live peacefully amongst each other. It has given me the freedom to just be, which is something I am grateful for.” – Student 4, Journal

Even though the impact of their learning differed from student to student, all students recognised the value that the community had brought into their lives, and vice versa.



“As we said our goodbyes throughout this week it was amazing to see what an impact the community has made on my life and how we as students have made an impact on individuals in the community.” – Student 2, Journal

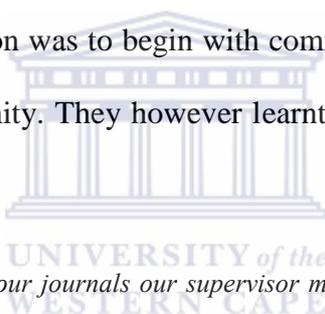
4.2 Theme 2 – Becoming Part of the Community

This theme highlights the students’ perceptions about their learning as it relates to community-focussed OT. This includes their learning about the steps of the UWC Community Process and community development. The theme focuses on the students’ interactions with the community as well as their experiences in becoming a member of the community during their community fieldwork placement. It highlights their experiences of the process that they had to follow as well as the challenges and accomplishments they experienced in becoming a

community member. This theme also addresses the students' experiences of selecting priority needs within a community fieldwork placement and the importance of working with the community members and not for them. The categories in this theme are: The power of community entry; and With all the issues, what is priority?

4.2.1 The power of community entry.

When starting their community fieldwork placement, students expressed that they came in with the eagerness and determination to 'get out there and do' and as a result their initial intention was to begin with community intervention before they got to know the community. They however learnt the importance of community-entry.



“Now from reading our journals our supervisor made us aware that we were missing out on the most important aspect of being part of the community. She brought to our attention that we could not start community intervention before we had done community entry.” – Student 1, Portfolio

Students expressed that even though they knew the theoretical knowledge behind community entry involving the skills of look, listen and learn, they lacked the experiential knowledge in using these skills. As a result the students realised that they experienced challenges in becoming a part of the community as their conceptualization of community entry was wrong.

“I then realised that even though I know that community entry involves look, listen and learn, the true meaning of it I don't know, because honestly I still feel

that I'm not part of the community, I still feel that I'm an outsider, which I realised is because my concept of community entry is wrong.” – Student 6, Journal

During the students' experience of community entry, they felt a barrier existed between the community members and themselves. Through discussions and feedback the students realised that community entry goes beyond the skills of look and listen and that it includes taking an interest in who the community members really are.

“It was amazing that everyone in the group felt that even though the community members were very friendly towards us, there is still a barrier between us and the community members. We approached our supervisor (Nikki) about how we were experiencing this whole community entry process and she pointed out to us that it appears as though we were going into the community with a hidden agenda and that community entry is not only about what you hear and see but that it involves taking an interest in what the community members are all about just by being yourself in the community.” – Student 2, Portfolio

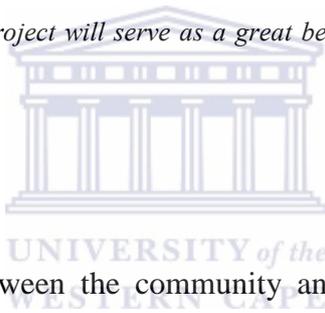
As the students' time in the community progressed, so did their experiences of community entry. Community entry was a topic of discussion covered in great detail at the start of each of the three phases of the students community fieldwork placement which they felt allowed them to begin to make the links between the community and what they need to do as professionals.

“What stood out for me this week was when we had our tutorial with our supervisor about the importance of community entry and that our role/project

*would not be effective if we do not understand the community.” – Student 5,
Journal*

During the discussions regarding community entry, students were reminded that this concept is not only about getting to know the community but that it also includes involving the community in their process.

*“In the orientation tutorial that we had on Monday Nikki reminded me of community entry and how important it is for us to get to know the community in order to feel part of the community as we want the community to be part of this project as it will be their responsibility to continue with the project after our 7 week block as this project will serve as a great benefit for the community.” –
Student 6, Journal*



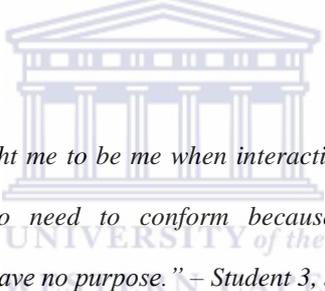
In making the links between the community and their role as a professional, students expressed that they felt that using community entry skills was not enough to get them to cross the barrier to becoming a community member. Through discussion the students came to realise that again their focus was very theoretical and too directed towards the project that they were required to implement. The students highlighted that in order to become a community member, they had to lose the ‘student hat’ and simply be in the community.

“From the conversation we had with Nikki, I decided that this week I was going to work on my community entry skills i.e. no hidden agenda, no thinking about the project we have to plan, I just wanted to ‘be’ in the community.” – Student 2, Journal

These experiences allowed students to reflect on their understanding and implementation of community entry. The students expressed that they began asking themselves questions regarding what role they themselves are playing in becoming a community member.

“What does community entry mean to me? How am I facilitating or hindering myself from becoming part of the community? These are all questions that I asked myself after we spoke to Nikki on Friday.” – Student 2, Journal

Some students realised that they had become so preoccupied with how the community members perceived them as students that they never took the time to just be themselves.

The logo of the University of the Western Cape, featuring a classical building facade with columns and a pediment, with the text 'UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE' overlaid.

“This block has taught me to be me when interacting with others. There is no need to pretend, no need to conform because then my presence and participation would have no purpose.” – Student 3, Journal

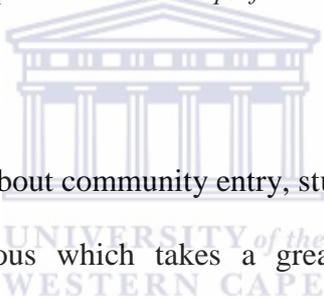
Other students decided that they needed to engage more with the community members rather than simply being a presence in the community.

“From my experiences of last week in terms of my community entry skills I have realised that I had to do more than just walking around and greet people. I actually have to start interacting with the members of the community.” – Student 5, Journal

Through all the discussions with each other and their supervisor, their reflections and reading literature about community entry, the students experienced that in

order to bridge the gap in becoming a community member, they had to do what the community did. The students expressed that when engaging in a social manner with the community members in activities that were of value and importance to them, the community members appeared more comfortable and responsive towards them. The students advised that community entry be from a personal and not professional perspective.

“Today’s horse riding made me realise the value of interacting with the community on a social level. Just by speaking to him it became easier for the conversation to flow and he became interested in wanting to talk to me. I would advise the next group of students to start their community entry in this manner. Start socialising as a person and not as a professional.” – Student 4, Journal



In their overall learning about community entry, students acknowledged that it is a process that is continuous which takes a great deal of time. One student commented that her personal experience of community entry was that it was ‘awesome’ because she did not realise how powerful community entry was. In reflecting upon it students realised that the key to community entry is to be themselves.

“I can still remember the challenges we faced during the first 2 weeks, when we felt that there was a barrier between us and the community. Through just ‘being’ with the community members and allowing them to just ‘be’ with us, eliminated this barrier and the community members really started to open up to us.” – Student 2, Journal

Towards the end of their community fieldwork placement, students expressed that they began to see the effect of their use of community entry and how that assisted them in becoming community members.

“After having been in the community for 5 weeks now, I feel that our participation in community activities has improved enormously. We are known in almost every street in the community. Whenever we walk the streets, hands shoot up in the air as people greet us and we greet back. It is almost like our rhythm has finally synchronised with that of the community.” – Student 1, Journal

4.2.2 With all the issues, what is the priority?

During their community fieldwork experience the students realised that the greatest benefit of being a part of the community is that they would be able to implement their projects as part of and with the community and not for them.

“...by being part of the community, you are working with them and not for them, and the community is more likely to be open to your presence in the community and your ideas and help.” – Student 2, Journal

In beginning the process of selecting a project the students felt that the community presented with so many issues which in their view all held equal importance. The students expressed uncertainty of how to go about selecting priority issues that they would address through their project.

“Today during tut I received confirmation about a question that has been bothering me since last week. Due to the fact that our group is moving on to the

analysis and motivation part of our block, I could not help but feel unsure about which problems is priority.” – Student 3, Journal

In order to address their uncertainty, the students together with their supervisor listed the problems of the community and looked at how the problems were linked to or impacted upon each other. Students felt that this method assisted them in categorising the needs of the community so that they could effectively select one project that could address a variety of needs.

“When my supervisor came through so that we could tackle analysis she put the needs of the community in perspective. We pasted more newsprint so that it would be easier to see the linkage. At first I didn’t see the purpose of this but as we continued I could see that my supervisor intended us to see that because of the connection between certain problems, if we choose correctly and addressed one problem, then our project we plan to implement would have an impact on those other areas that are connected to the need our project is aimed at.” – Student 4, Journal

In prioritising the needs of the community from their perspective, through feedback and discussions, the students came to realise that if they come to understand the links between the existing problems within the community, addressing one need might have an effect on other needs.

“This made the ripple effect so much more clearer and I could understand how one thing can make a big change. Even though I want to save the world, I need to understand that in order to do that, I first need to understand the links between the problems so that a huge ripple effect can be made.” – Student 4, Journal

When looking at the overview of the needs of the community and how these needs impacted on the community members, the students were advised to make use of the 5WH technique. The students did not realise that this technique could be used in a community fieldwork setting, and so they expressed surprise at how it assisted them in analysing the priority needs.

“This technique (5WH) really worked because it broke down the priority needs so well that the underlying factors stood out clearly and through this method we could specifically see who exactly was affected and how.” – Student 3, Journal

4.3 Theme 3 – The Big Word ‘Occupation’

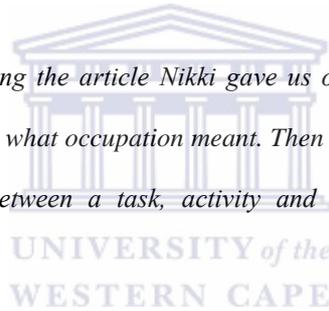


This theme focuses on the students’ experiences of the process they underwent in developing their understanding of the concept of occupation from an individual to a community perspective. It highlights their learning in differentiating between a task, an activity and an occupation as well as the concept of engaging in occupations. This theme also addresses the students’ experiences of how they came to make the links between occupation and the community and their learning in incorporating occupation into the process they were required to undergo during their community fieldwork placement. The categories in this theme are: Breaking it down – Task, Activity and Occupation; Making the concept [occupation] bigger; and Occupationalizing what we have to do.

4.3.1 Breaking it down – Task, Activity and Occupation.

To begin the process of conceptualizing occupation, the students and their supervisor engaged in a discussion about the differences between a task, an activity and an occupation. Students were instructed to prepare for this tutorial by trying to find literature to support their understanding. Some students found that reading literature about occupation allowed them to begin to analyse the differences between tasks, activities and occupations. Other students felt that reading gave them a clearer understanding of the concept of occupation. However, when the discussions took place they found that they were not able to differentiate between tasks, activities and occupations.

“At first, after reading the article Nikki gave us on occupation and health, I thought I understood what occupation meant. Then Nikki started questioning us on the difference between a task, activity and occupation.” – Student 4, Portfolio



After the students gave their input regarding the differences between tasks, activities and occupations, various examples were used. This allowed the students to differentiate between the three.

“Through using various examples during the tutorial, I understood the differences between the three concepts of tasks activities and occupations.” – Student 2, Portfolio

Students were asked to give examples of occupations that were specific to their lives. They felt that breaking their own examples into tasks, and activities, allowed them to understand the concept of occupation more in depth.

“But after the tut with Nikki I realised that how I saw and defined occupation was actually what a task was. By looking at occupation from a personal perspective it is easier to understand.” – Student 3, Portfolio

Students highlighted that learning the differences between a task, activity and an occupation allowed them to eliminate the ambiguous nature of the word occupation which in turn made it more meaningful to them. This also in turn allowed them to think progressively about how tasks become activities, and how activities become occupations.

“Before starting university occupation merely meant ‘job’ to me and now it means so much more and I understand what occupation is but I have never thought about the following: when does an activity become an occupation? Today’s tut clarified that for me.” – Student 3, Journal

Ultimately the students felt that addressing occupation from a personal perspective is what best enabled them to develop their understanding. In line with this they added that students should develop their own personal definition of occupation and not only adhere to the ones already given in the literature.

“I had a light bulb moment today during the conversation with my house mates as I have learnt that there is no one fixed definition of what occupation is and what it means. I think that as a 4th year student I should attempt to establish a

personal definition of what occupation is and then maybe it will assist me in developing an idea of what OT is to me.” – Student 3, Journal

4.3.2 Making the concept [occupation] bigger.

Once the students’ understood the concept of occupation, they were asked whether they understood where occupation fit into their profession. The students expressed that they struggled to conceptualize this notion.

“Today we had a joint tutorial with the other students and the topic of discussion started with the big word occupation. I knew what occupation was, but when Nikki asked us why occupation is important in our profession I went blank.” – Student 6, Journal



The first step to addressing the link between occupation and the OT profession required the students’ to reflect on the importance and impact of engaging in occupations on one’s health and well-being. This discussion entailed making use of the students’ experiences within their community fieldwork placement. The example that stood out most to the students was that of the high rate of teenage pregnancy in the community. Through discussion the students’ came to understand that because the teenagers of the community lack meaningful occupations to engage in, this has a negative impact on their health and well-being.

“She (Nikki) used the example of teenage pregnancy in the community and she asked us what is missing or what lacks in the whole community that causes the increased number of teenage pregnancy.” – Student 6, Journal

The next step in this process required students to understand the method in which engaging in occupation results in transformation. Through the use of literature, the elements that constitute engaging in occupation were introduced to the students. Students felt that by discussing each of the aspects of doing, being and becoming individually and then analysing its developing nature, allowed them a clearer understanding of the concept of transformation through occupation.

“Transformation through Occupation. It has never made more sense to me than when we discussed it in terms of doing, being and finally becoming.” – Student 2, Journal

Using this understanding that the students’ had then established, a discussion ensued in which the students and their supervisor contextualised occupation into the community and tried to establish what their role as an OT in the community might be. Students were encouraged to look at the priority needs in the community and using the 5WH method, establish how each of the needs impact on the occupational engagement of the community members. In order to do this, students had to have an understanding of the occupational nature of communities in terms of occupational apartheid, occupational injustice and occupational risk factors. Students felt that the complex nature of this discussion left them feeling somewhat overwhelmed.

“We spoke of occupational apartheid, injustice and the occupational risk factors. I was a bit overwhelmed when we spoke of these terms and I think I need to discuss it again with the group to get a better understanding until it makes sense to me.” – Student 2, Journal

The students however also expressed that having an understanding of the occupational nature of communities allowed them to further consolidate their insight into the role of an OT in a community.

“With this understanding of occupational risk factors I realised during tutorial that our role as OT’s will be to work or rather collaborate with marginalized people in order to ensure availability of resources and opportunities.” – Student 1, Journal

4.3.3 Occupationalizing what we have to do.

In gaining an understanding of where and how occupation fits into a community, students felt that they were able to reflect on their initial perceptions of the community and evaluate how and why those perceptions have changed.

“When I first came to the community my impression was that the youth are lazy and don’t want to work. Now I realise that I failed to see the connection between the occupational risk factors and the current state of the community.” – Student 1, Journal

In addition, the students’ also felt that understanding how occupation fits into a community allowed them to centralize occupation as part of their learning not only in a practical sense, but also with regards to their written work.

“I think all of us understand occupation now after that tutorial which will make it easier for us to be OCCU-CENTRIC (is this a word??) with regard to our assessments and proposals.” – Student 3, Journal

During their learning regarding being ‘occu-centric’ a discussion ensued between the students’ and their supervisor about the importance of occupation within the community project both as part of the process and as part of the end product. Students understood the concept of process and end product as the use of occupation as a means and an end and were encouraged to further research it to strengthen their understanding.

“This realisation became evident to me when Nikki mentioned “a means and an end” (process as important as end product). She explained to me that having an end product is equally as important as the process we need to follow in order to get to the end product. Nikki encouraged us to search for literature to give us a better understanding of the meaning of ‘a means and an end’.” – Student 6, Portfolio



In reflecting on their overall learning regarding the concept of occupation and the role of the OT in a community setting, students expressed that they came to realise the importance of all OT’s having an understanding of this concept as it can be used to address a wide range of social injustices.

“Thinking about these various experiences makes me realise the importance for OT’s to understand the concept of occupation, and how occupations can be used to address various injustices.” – Student 2, Journal

4.4 Theme 4 – The Fundamental Aspects of Learning

This theme focuses on the students' experiences of supervision styles and methods that they found assisted them in their learning during their community fieldwork placement. It highlights how simplifying concepts assisted their understanding and how using illustrations developed their ability to make the links between these concepts. This theme also addresses the students' perceptions of the characteristics they feel are an important part of supervision. It captures how students came to understand and appreciate academic reading as part of their learning experience as well as how reflective writing assisted them in this regard. This theme also addresses the students' experiences of how they came to understand theory as an important part of their community fieldwork placement as well as how theory informed their practice, and vice versa. The categories in this theme are: Making abstract concepts simple; That personal touch; That thing called theory; and Reading, reflecting and more reading.

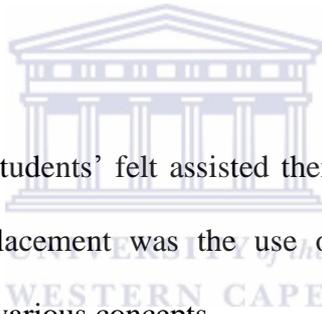
4.4.1 Making abstract concepts simple.

Students felt that, if during discussions and tutorials, explanations are put into layman's terms, it becomes easier for them to relate to it as opposed to it being in or from a book.

“Simple words made all the theory around meaningful occupation more real and less out there.” – Student 3, Journal

In a tutorial where the students and their supervisor discussed the difference between enablement and empowerment, an analogy of tying shoelaces was used. The students expressed that this analogy allowed them not only to understand the concept but have the knowledge to apply the concept in a practical setting.

“Nikki gave us a great explanation called learning to tie shoelaces. She asked us how are you going to teach me to tie my shoelaces? The first thing we said was we will show you what to do, then you copy us and then you do it on your own. So she looked at us with a smile asking and then? We just looked at her with confused faces but then she explained to us in order for us to know that she is able to tie her shoelaces after we equip her with the skills to do it, she has to teach someone else.” – Student 6, Journal



Another method which students’ felt assisted them in their learning during their community fieldwork placement was the use of diagrams or illustrations in explaining or discussing various concepts.

“Occupational therapy theories can be so difficult to grasp and when a supervisor makes them portable and palatable you cannot help but hold onto them lest you lose them. My supervisor likes to think in pictures and I have really found it helpful.” – Student 1, Portfolio

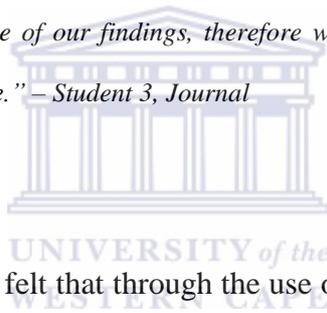
One of the examples a student described was looking at a variety of occupational terminology that they have encountered over their years of study and making use of a diagram to illustrate how those words link together.

“In the joint tutorial with the other community students Nikki asked us to mention some big words that we have come across over the years of studying

OT. We came up with words such as occupational apartheid, occupational injustice, occupational deprivation, occupational alienation, occupational imbalance and occupational engagement. Nikki used a diagram to explain to us how all the words that we mentioned links to each other.” – Student 6, Portfolio

Students felt that diagrams and illustrations assisted them in completing their written work as well as understanding how to incorporate theory and practice on paper.

“This illustration (of the PEO model) will definitely make it easier to write our motivation because it shows exactly how theory and the interpretation thereof helped us make sense of our findings, therefore we could identify where and how we can intervene.” – Student 3, Journal



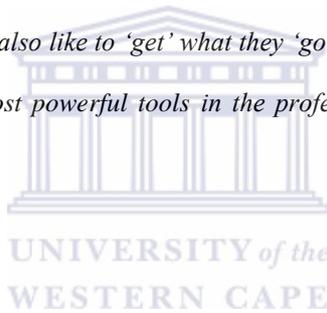
In addition, the students' felt that through the use of diagrams and illustrations the whole process that they were required to pursue seemed tangible and as such they felt that they were able to be thorough in their written and practical work.

“Approaching analysis the way we did by placing paper on the walls, it made things much clearer and real rather than just speaking it. I could see the process that I needed to follow in order to cover my bases when implementing the project and if anything doesn't go according to plan, it would be easier to identify where the error was made because the whole process was done with thoroughness.” – Student 4, Portfolio

4.4.2 That personal touch.

During the orientation tutorial for the community fieldwork placement, students were asked to think about what they would have liked to have learnt by the end of the fieldwork placement. One student commented that this allowed her to keep her own expectations at the back of her mind during the fieldwork placement. Setting their own learning expectations allowed the student to set personal and professional goals.

“Another goal that I also set for myself is to really ‘get’ what occupation is all about. I use to watch in awe in Friday tutorials when the other students talked about occupation. It seemed as if they ‘get’ what it is all about and by the end of this block I would also like to ‘get’ what they ‘got’ about occupation because this is one of the most powerful tools in the profession of OT.” – Student 2, Journal



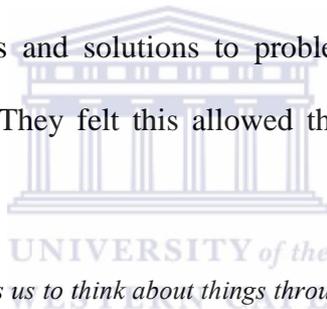
Students felt that the teaching methods used within their supervision, fit perfectly into the OT profession. One of the methods used within the community fieldwork placement was taught to the students during their earlier years of study. Making use of it within a practical setting reassured the students that all aspects learnt within the course have a purpose within the profession.

“I had totally forgotten about the famous 5WH (what, where, when, why, who and how) and when using it today I felt reassured that all the things we’ve learnt over the past 3 years have a perfect purpose within our profession.” – Student 3, Journal

Students also felt that sharing their knowledge about concepts that they had learnt with other students allowed them the opportunity to evaluate how well they understood what it is that they have learnt.

“We took her through the story that Nikki told us about tying your shoelaces and it really felt good sharing the knowledge you have just gained. And I also think that by sharing my knowledge with the other students was a good evaluation for me to see how well I know the concept of empowerment.” – Student 6, Portfolio

Students felt that it was important that their supervisor drove them to think about the answers to questions and solutions to problems instead of just having the answers given to them. They felt this allowed them to develop and reach their potential.



“Nikki always pushes us to think about things through asking why and thinking this way allows us to discover things about ourselves and our environments (social/physical) and in the process we slowly reach our occupational potential.” – Student 3, Journal

Students indicated that this frustrated them at times because even if they did not come to an answer or solution, they were required to research it further.

“This bothered me from the moment Nikki asked us and I wanted an answer. Nikki gave us an article to read about occupation and health.” – Student 3, Portfolio

The students highlighted that they felt it important that they be able to communicate openly with their supervisor and that their supervisor encourages their learning. The students also expressed that the supervisor-student relationship needs to be taken up in a benevolent rather than authoritarian manner.

“It is important having a supervisor that listens to you, that encourages you, that encourages your learning, that doesn’t take offense by the things you say or you don’t take offense by the things they say. Having a relationship where you are not intimidated by your supervisor, where your supervisor doesn’t break you down, where you can go to your supervisor and say I have this problem and I need to sort this out.” – Student 2, Evaluation Group

In line with this, some students felt that a supervisors approach should be on a student level with the supervisor being open to learning from the students. This environment they felt makes sharing ideas and opinions easier.

“I like (Nikki’s) approach very much as she comes down to our level and makes me feel very comfortable. She does not come across as the ‘I know everything’ type of person which makes sharing ideas and opinions much easier.” – Student 3, Journal

Other students felt that some personal connection with the supervisor was important as it allowed the student-supervisor relationship to be natural. This allowed the students to feel as if they could be themselves in their learning environment. Students also highlighted that it was important for them to learn at their own pace while simultaneously being challenged.

“I loved the fact that I was able to connect with (Nikki) on a personal level. It didn’t feel like a formal and stiff relationship. You always left me thinking and you allowed me to be silly and zainy throughout our interaction. I liked the fact that you allowed me to learn at my own pace.” – Student 4, Journal

4.4.3 That thing called theory

As part of their learning in their community fieldwork placement, students were required to select and understand relevant theories that applied to the process they were required to undergo. To begin, students’ were asked whether they understood the difference between a model, a theory and a frame of reference. Students highlighted that this discussion was very interesting to them and emphasised the importance of knowing that a difference does exist.

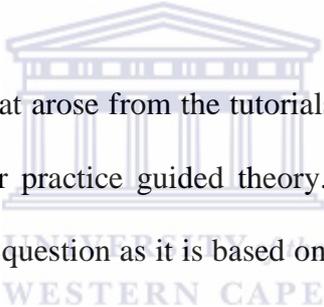
“All this talk about theory is really interesting and the community block has emphasized the importance of knowing models, FOR (frame of reference), theory, and the difference between them.” – Student 3, Journal

In the discussion that followed, students’ were required to select possible theories that could guide their practice within their community fieldwork placement. The students needed to articulate why the model they selected would be beneficial to the community. One student highlights that she was ‘dumbfounded’ when their supervisor questioned the relevance of another model.

“After this discovery in understanding exactly how the PEO model fit into the community and the project, Nikki asked if the KAWA model wasn’t also applicable. Once she said this I was dumbfounded. I had no idea where the KAWA model would fit in.” – Student 4, Portfolio

This led to a discussion about the similarities and differences between various models which the students' felt was valuable as it highlighted to them the importance of having a thorough understanding of the theory that is used to guide practice.

“It was through discussion in our tutorial about when the EHP (Ecology of Human Performance) is used and when PEO (Person – Environment – Occupation) is used that I got to an understanding of its differences. This experience has taught me the importance of understanding what theory you want to use before incorporating it into guiding your project.” – Student 4, Portfolio



One of the discussions that arose from the tutorials regarding theory was whether theory guided practice or practice guided theory. Students expressed that there was no set answer to this question as it is based on the learning experiences. In an example one student explains that she had read all the literature regarding community entry but only when she started interacting with the community did community entry make sense to her.

“In this process practice seemed to guide theory (for me at least) because even though I went through the articles in our Human Occupation course reader about how to go about entering the community, it is only when we started interacting with the community that the concept of community entry made sense to me.” – Student 3, Portfolio

Another student explained that after experiencing a situation in the community in which a younger child spoke to her in a manner that was not culturally acceptable

to her, she relied on theory to explain her reaction and how to deal with such situations in the future.

“What stood out in the article for me was that we should be aware of our own attitudes towards people who are culturally different from us. At that moment I realised that I was so shocked because the language use is not a part of who I am. This made me understand that people are different from me and that I should become more aware of my attitudinal prejudices. In this case theory seemed to guide practice and because of what I encountered I understood theory better.” – Student 2, Journal

Students highlighted that their learning experiences during the community fieldwork placement, allowed them to see theory in practice. They expressed that theory is no longer simply part of a book but a real aspect to them allowing them to make links between the real world and the theoretical world.

“Throughout the block, theory has become reality. I made many links between the real world and theory. Occupational deprivation was merely a part of literature until I came to the community. Occupational potential was just a definition out of a textbook until I came to the community. Occupational choice was never a term heard or read of until I was introduced to it by Nikki.” – Student 3, Journal

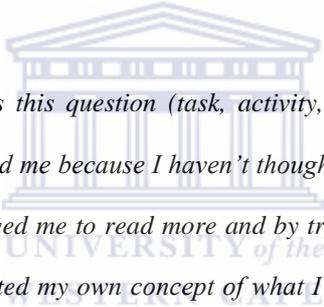
4.4.4 Reading, reflecting and more reading.

Students expressed that they initially found academic reading to be unenjoyable and tedious but highlighted that being expected to read and given articles to read

by their supervisor assisted them to make links within their learning during their community fieldwork placement.

“I would never have been able to make such a link if it wasn't for Nikki who gave me an article on doing, being and becoming.” – Student 3, Portfolio

Students also emphasised that the discussions held during tutorials and the experiences they had during their community fieldwork placement motivated them to want to know more. They felt that by taking this initiative and interest in reading allowed them to find solutions to their challenges and answers to their questions.



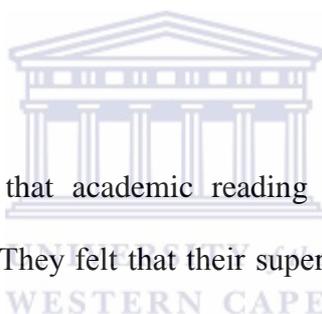
“Since Nikki gave us this question (task, activity, occupation differences) to answer it has bothered me because I haven't thought about it much. This entire process has encouraged me to read more and by trying to find differences and similarities I formulated my own concept of what I think. I don't think I would have been able to conceive an idea of how to go about answering the question if I had not made the effort to read up about it.” – Student 3, Journal

Some students even went as far as to find theory to back up the analogy (tying shoelaces) that their supervisor used to explain the concept of empowerment. The students expressed surprise that such theory actually existed and that because of the analogy used they were able to understand the literature easier.

“I read theory to see whether Nikki's explanation of what empowerment is, are linked to what theory says and to my surprise theory actually agreed to Nikki's explanation and actually really made sense.” – Student 6, Journal

Towards the end of their community fieldwork placement, students' were able to reflect on the insight they had developed with regards to the importance of academic reading. Some students expressed that academic reading was a limitation to them but were able to recognise the importance of academic reading not only as a student but as a qualified professional.

“Reading is one of my weak points, and it is only through reading that one is exposed to theory. So having said that, it is clearly an aim for me to read more in order to see how theory informs practice and vice versa. This might seem small but it will be a challenge for me. I think reading is definitely important not just when we are students but as qualified practitioners as well.” – Student 2, Journal



The students identified that academic reading and reflective writing operate collaboratively together. They felt that their supervisor's encouragement to apply theory or literature to their practical experiences in the community, allowed them to develop their ability to integrate theory into practice thereby allowing theory to become a tangible aspect of their learning experiences.

“I also learnt more on my community block in terms of theory and stuff cos Nikki always encouraged us to take the theory that we read and compare it to the community. Do we see the theory in the community and then through that reflect on how it actually fits in and then also she would comment, she would probe questions...so what does this mean...? You know like sometimes you will reflect on an event or describe something but then the theory isn't really there or you don't integrate it enough and that's how I discovered like you really need to know your theory and you really need to read up more on things so that

you can actually not just apply but also just to see the link between things so that theory can become real to you.” – Student 3, Evaluation Group

As the students’ ability and willingness to write reflectively improved, so did their understanding of the importance and value thereof. Students expressed that they understood how reflective writing contributes to their immediate and future practice as an OT.

“I have now begun to understand why reflective writing is emphasised during the course of the year. It gives / provides us with a space in our busy lives to sit and reflect on how and what we learnt on a daily basis and how we can use what we learnt in the future.” – Student 3, Journal



4.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided a comprehensive overview of the emerging thematic categories of the participants’ experiences of fieldwork supervision during their community fieldwork placement. Using the thematic analysis suggested by Terre Blanche et al., (2006) the responses of the participants’ feelings regarding their community fieldwork experience, their perceptions about their learning related to community focused OT and occupation based practice as well as their experience of the various supervision styles and methods they were exposed to during their community fieldwork were obtained. The following chapter focuses on a discussion of these responses in relation to relevant literature available for this study.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to explore how the 2009 final year OT students' experienced fieldwork supervision during their community fieldwork placement. Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the findings of the study related to the objectives established for the study. Therefore the discussion will focus on the 2009 final year students' feelings regarding their community fieldwork experience and their perceptions about their learning related to community focused OT and occupation based practice. I also discuss the students' experience of the various supervision styles and methods they were exposed to during their community fieldwork. This discussion follows the themes described in the previous chapter namely: The Interpersonal Aspects of the Fieldwork Experience; Becoming Part of the Community; The Big Word 'Occupation'; and The Fundamental Aspects of Learning. The discussion also links relevant literature to the research findings.

5.1 Students' feelings regarding community fieldwork

The findings in this study suggest that the students experienced various positive and negative emotions related to their community fieldwork. The theme 'Interpersonal aspects of the fieldwork experience' highlights the personal and professional growth of the students and their perceptions of the challenges and accomplishments they experienced throughout the duration of their community fieldwork placement. The students' feelings regarding community fieldwork will

be discussed in terms of the emotions the students experienced during community fieldwork, the students' development of their professional judgement, and the challenges and experiences of their personal and professional development.

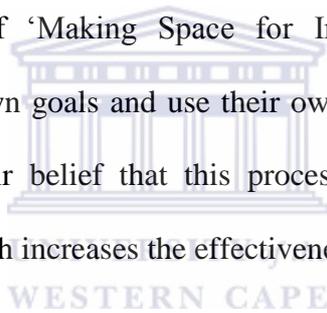
5.1.1 Student emotions

Wiemer (1994) highlights that students, when making the transition from an academic to a fieldwork setting, are likely to base their impressions and perceptions of the new fieldwork setting on how other students have described it and how they themselves have come to imagine it. The transition process generally results in student feelings of anxiety, uncertainty and heightened levels of stress. These feelings of anxiety, uncertainty and heightened levels of stress are evident in the findings of this study which emphasise that the 2009 final year OT students felt a fear of the unknown when they initially entered into their community fieldwork placement. These fears were related to not knowing what to expect from the community or how the community members would respond to them and not knowing what to expect while living in the community with fellow students. The students also shared that they felt overwhelmed by the tasks that lay ahead of them and the responsibility that was placed on them with regards to the successful implementation of the Community Process. These findings are supported by Mackenzie (2002), who states that it is expected of OT students' to be anxious and uneasy about the unknown aspects of an upcoming fieldwork placement. She suggests that briefing the students may clarify any confusions and perceptions that the student might have.

The orientation tutorial that is provided to students by their supervisor during the first week of their community fieldwork placement addresses orientation to the fieldwork placement, clarifies the expectations of the students' with regard to the academic and practical aspects of the placement and allows students to share their feelings of anxiety and uncertainty. The students in the study mentioned that having expectations clarified by their supervisor and being allowed the platform to share their feelings allowed them to feel less anxious and increase their confidence in themselves and what they needed to achieve. The effects of the orientation tutorial on the students' anxiety levels is supported by Mackenzie (2002) who asserts that these discussions hold value in reducing student stress and anxiety when they face uncertain fieldwork demands. It can therefore be concluded that the aspects covered by the supervisor in the orientation tutorial and the resultant effects on the students' ability to learn, is in line with one of Yerxa's (1994) key functions for effective supervision, which states that the student should be provided with reliable guidelines of performance and evaluation so that they are able to know where and how to change in order to meet their expectations. In addition these findings are further consistent with Kolb and Kolb's (2005) seventh educational principle for enhancing positive learning experiences called 'Making Spaces for Feeling and Thinking', which states that students' emotions influence their reasoning which impacts on their learning, and that supervisors should create spaces to manage student emotions in order to positively influence student learning.

From the findings of the study it was evident that the students' were uncertain about the lack of structured learning that presents itself in a community fieldwork

setting. The students expressed that they were concerned that they had no direct, on-site supervision and no step-by-step procedure to follow as they had in their individual and group fieldwork placements. The issue around student uncertainty regarding the lack of structured learning was addressed by their supervisor during the initial orientation with the students' where they were encouraged to actively participate in their learning by creating their own structure in the community through designing their own timetable, mapping out their academic and practical expectations and using their personal learning objectives as a guide in developing their learning. The encouragement and support given to students' to address the lack of unstructured learning is supported by Kolb and Kolb's (2005) eighth educational principle of 'Making Space for Inside-out Learning' in which students' design their own goals and use their own previous knowledge to guide their learning. It is their belief that this process allows students' to develop intrinsic motivation which increases the effectiveness of their learning.



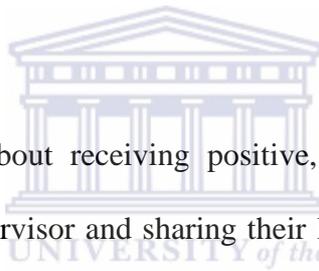
In order to further address the students' feelings of uncertainty about the unstructured learning in their community fieldwork placement they were also encouraged by their supervisor to seek answers to their questions through reading, reflecting and evaluating their own performance. The students' feelings of uncertainty regarding unstructured learning correspond with James and Prigg (2004), who state that in such situations students are likely to become anxious especially if it is the first time they are expected to be self-directed in their learning. They are of the opinion that a student's level of confidence is an important factor that influences their engagement in self-directed learning and that it is therefore important that fieldwork supervisors' adequately prepare and

support students' during their learning. It can therefore be concluded that the support and encouragement provided to students' by their supervisor in the initial orientation is endorsed by one of Yerxa's (1994) four key functions for effective supervision, which involves providing support to students' in order to enhance their growth toward independence of thought and action from their supervisor.

Fieldhouse and Fedden (2009) assert that self-directed learning is a more effective approach to student learning as it fits in with adult learning theories. They believe that the ideal student approach to learning should be deep learning in which the student is motivated by a need to make sense of things, to interpret knowledge and develop an understanding of their learning expectations. Due to the nature of role-emerging placements as described in Chapter 2, students are allowed to develop a deep understanding and take greater responsibility for their learning (Fieldhouse & Fedden, 2009, p303). From this perspective it can be deduced that a combination of support and guidance provided by the supervisor and the unstructured learning environment of the community fieldwork placement afforded the students' the opportunity to take greater responsibility for their learning as is evident in the students' expression of their growing enthusiasm at the importance and value of being willing to learn and taking responsibility for their learning.

The findings of this study reported that in taking responsibility for their own learning, the final year 2009 OT students became excited about their developing understandings of the concepts of occupation-based community practice which

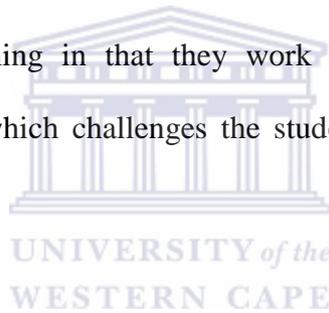
increased their eagerness to learn and their feelings of accomplishment. The students stated that receiving positive feedback from their supervisor on their achievements as well as constructive non-judgemental feedback on areas that required attention encouraged further learning and that they felt proud being asked to share their learning with peers within tutorials. Feedback is identified as a strategy used to facilitate student learning in Quadrant 2 of the Four-Quadrant Model of Facilitated Learning (Greber et al., 2007b). Feedback can be given verbally, figuratively or in written format by the facilitator to provide a critique of student performance. Greber et al., (2007b) states that feedback in this form can support students' by engaging them in reflection on their own performance.



The students feelings about receiving positive, constructive, non-judgemental feedback from their supervisor and sharing their learning with peers is similar to the findings of a study in which Bonello (2001b) explored students' perceptions of their fieldwork education. She found that the students' recognized positive experiences of supervision when supervisors' showed interest and trust in the students and provided them with constructive and on-going feedback. She asserts that if feedback given to students is only for the purpose of correcting their mistakes then the fear of failure is reinforced in students. Sharing of fieldwork learning experiences encourages students' to increase their involvement in their fieldwork placement, raises their awareness about the issues relevant to the placement, and enhances their confidence in their abilities to apply knowledge to practice (Mackenzie, 2002).

5.1.2 Developing professional judgement

One of the most prominent findings in the study was how the students' came to realise that they were judgemental towards some of the situations they encountered in the community. One of the students expressed how she considered the youth of the community to be lazy because they chose not to engage in the community's tradition of subsistence farming. The findings of the study indicated that students' only came to realise that they held judgements and opinions about the community once they received feedback from their supervisor regarding their negative, disapproving and presumptuous comments. This is supported by Hagedorn and Adams (2006) view that the diverse nature of fieldwork placements influences student learning in that they work with clients and communities different to their own which challenges the students' preconceived ideas about what is right and wrong.



In line with the findings of the study which reported on the unstructured learning nature of the community fieldwork placement, Nixon and Creek (2006) state that the need for professional judgement surfaces where logical guidelines are unclear and the situations that professional's find themselves in can be interpreted in more than one way. They add that in the light of new information, the reinterpretation of old information and the wisdom of retrospection, judgement is open to new understandings. This statement supports the findings of this study through the students' reporting that once they received feedback from their supervisor and engaged in discussion during tutorials about the diversity they were experiencing, and the assumptions they were making did they realise what caused their

judgements and what they needed to do to change them. This is evident in the findings through one student who expressed her assumption that the youth of the community had nothing to do. When she was challenged by her supervisor as to how she knew that standing on the street corners was not a form of leisure to the youth, she then realised that her perception of leisure was different to that of the youth of the community.

Students reported that being encouraged by their supervisor to conceptualise the community according to a theoretical model, to spend time in the community using their community entry skills, and to reflect on their own personal feelings made a difference in how they perceived the community. This finding agrees with Nixon and Creek (2006) who states that as professional's we are less capable at dealing with the social aspects of our professional judgements because we prefer to question rather than listen and speak rather than to hear. They encourage professionals to engage in dialogue with their clients and communities as professional knowledge develops from their information and insights gathered in this way. It can therefore be concluded that the supervisor was able to 'Create and Hold a Hospitable Space for Learning' based on Kolb and Kolb's (2005, p. 207) educational principles for the promotion of positive learning experiences for students as "a learning space that encourages the expression of differences and the psychological safety to support the student in facing these challenges" was created.

The findings of the study also highlight that students' were only able to completely conceive how they were being judgemental when they experienced or linked it to a practical aspect of their community fieldwork. One student expressed that she understood her supervisors feedback given to them regarding being judgemental but only when the group of students sat in on a life orientation class in the high school of the community and experienced responding judgementally towards the way a teacher reacted towards his learners did they realise that they were indeed being judgemental. She shares that she did not take into consideration the reasons why the teacher acted in that manner (such as large class numbers, lack of resources and unruly learner behaviour) before she judged him for, in her opinion, the unprofessional way in which he reacted to the learner. Whiteford and Wright St-Clair (2002, p. 133) reported similar findings in a study in which they explored OT students' perceptions of their intercultural learning experiences. They highlight that students expressed 'learning through doing' when dealing with diverse clients and communities was more useful than other types of learning. They assert that practical experiences and opportunities, coupled with reflection, is vital for the students' development of intercultural competence in dealing with diversity.

Based on the aforementioned findings it can be concluded that their supervisors' guidance, encouragement and facilitation of the students' judgemental perceptions of the community influenced their ability to be aware of their preconceived ideas and feelings and to view the community in a non-judgemental objective manner. This is a key function for effective supervision that supervisors should adopt as it demonstrates Yerxa's (1994) belief that supervisors' should teach students more

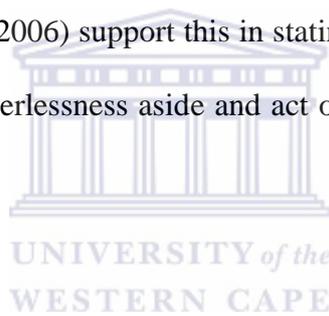
than facts which should include the principles and attitudes that are essential to professional practice.

5.1.3 Personal and professional development

Students in the study mentioned that they realised the importance of merging their personal growth with their professional development as the one had an impact on the other. The findings of the study addressed in the category of ‘Separating the personal from the professional’, emphasise the students’ experiences in overcoming the challenges they faced in responding to situations from a personal or a professional nature. Lorenzo and Buchanan (2006) state that students might find themselves in situations in which they are not always dealing with a problem or treating a pathology and because of this it is important for students to continuously reflect on their personal and professional boundaries. They are of the opinion that as a student’s position in a community deepens they might find themselves in unfamiliar situations which could require them to find new and alternative ways of addressing the problem.

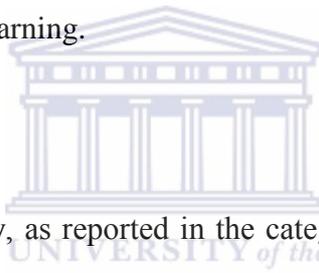
The students in this study expressed that they experienced feeling helpless at some of the challenges that the community was faced with. One student describes a situation in which an elderly community member who had a stroke was explaining the difficulties she experienced since the stroke and a resulting negative experience with the hospital she was admitted to. The student expressed that she had to keep reminding herself of the purpose of the visit with the community

member and her role as a professional because she felt a longing to help them and her heart broke because there was nothing she could do. By having discussions about their fieldwork experiences with their supervisor and each other and being encouraged to find literature supporting their fieldwork experiences, made them aware of the numerous concerns of the community members and the complicated issues within the community. The students expressed that because of this they were able to approach these situations from an empathetic rather than sympathetic point of view. Price and Miner (2007) define this process as empathetic competence and describe it as the therapists' emotional judgement in recognising the client (or community's) needs and responding in a therapeutic manner. Lorenzo and Buchanan (2006) support this in stating that students need to learn to put their feelings of powerlessness aside and act on issues in which they are able to make a difference.



From the findings of the study the students' also experienced personal changes throughout their community fieldwork. One student in the study mentioned that she had to recognise and reflect on how being shy affected her interaction within the community. All students recognised the impact that their personal selves had on their professional development and how that relationship was a vital aspect in understanding the community and their role as OT's in this setting. Galvaan (2006, p. 107) states that 'the ability to recognise the strengths and areas that need to change within a community is directly related to the students ability to reflect on their belief in their own capacity and potential'. In this study, the students' expressed that receiving written feedback in their journals, being able to engage in discussion about their personal developments and being encouraged to reflect

about their experiences allowed them to be more aware of the relationship and transition between their personal and professional development. This finding is supported by Galvaan's (2006) belief that the primary role of the supervisor in role-emerging settings is to facilitate the students' ability to critically examine their personal attitudes and beliefs toward the community they work with through reflection in and on their experiences. Du Toit and Wilkinson (2010) assert that a central view related to experiential learning and the learning process connected to personal and professional development is reflective practice. The findings thus highlight the importance of reflective practice as a valuable part of creating meaningful learning experiences for students and developing their ability to engage in self-directed learning.



The findings of the study, as reported in the category of 'Doing things we never thought we were capable of' strengthens the students' acknowledgement of the value that the community added to their personal lives and the impact that they felt they had left on the community in return. This category is supported by Galvaan's (2006) statement that students need to believe that being an OT means that they recognise the value of their clients and community's in ways that inspire their potential to become all that they are able to be and in that way contribute to social change. This is displayed in one student expressing that she appreciated that her supervisor left them in the community and trusted them to do a good job as to her it showed respect and trust to them as students and prospective OT's. She added that this is part of what made them do things that they never thought they were capable of. From this it can be deduced that the supervisor 'Respected the

Student and their Experience' based on Kolb and Kolb's (2005) first educational principle for the promotion of positive learning experiences for students.

5.2 Students' perceptions of their learning with regards to community focused OT

The findings in this study suggest that students' experienced a great deal of learning with regards to their interactions in and with the community. The theme 'Becoming a part of the community' highlights the students' journey in becoming a part of the community including the challenges and accomplishments they experienced in doing so. From the data collected it is evident that the process of becoming a part of the community allowed students' to define their role as an OT in a community setting and to gain an understanding of community development in the context of their role within the community. The students perceptions of their learning with regards to community focused OT will be discussed in terms of their experiences of community entry, and their understanding of the role of the OT in the community.

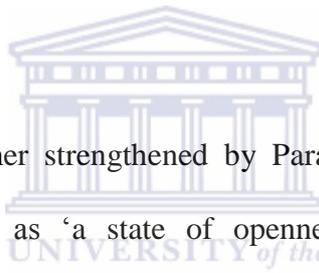
5.2.1 Community entry

Tareen and Omar (1997) state that in order for a true partnership to occur with the community, community entry first needs to take place. They explain that this is a gradual and time consuming process that depends greatly on how the community is approached. It is important to note that even though community entry is

positioned as the first step in the Community Process (refer to Chapter 2) which technically only requires the attention of the first group of students (refer to Chapter 3), the findings of the study show that students in all three groups perceived community entry to be an important aspect in their learning about community focused OT. One student expressed how she thought community entry to be ‘awesome’ as she did not realise the power that community entry held. These findings align with Broderick’s (2004, p. 245) statement that ‘only a process of gradual engagement and deepening trust can develop the OT’s confidence, competence, and acceptability by the community’.

In this study, the students’ share this ‘process of gradual engagement and deepening trust’ to be a process of trial and error which required on-going discussion, academic reading and reflection based on their experiences. The students expressed that through encouragement by their supervisor they began to reflect on their understanding and implementation of community entry and how this linked to their role as an OT within community development. Lauckner et al., (2007) reported similar results in a study which explored the experiences of OT’s in community development. They found that their participants’ response to the challenges they encountered was to engage in reflecting on community development and its relationship to their role. For these participants the reflective process was continuous, required them to read but resulted in a deeper understanding of their role as OT’s in community development. The participants added that the development of their knowledge and skills required for community development was however achieved through experience rather than from their formal OT education. The findings of the study by Lauckner et al., (2007)

supports the findings of this study in that it highlights that the students theoretical understanding of the community entry skills of look, listen and learn was insufficient in allowing them to bridge the gap between them as students and the community. The students expressed that through discussions in tutorials they came to realise that community entry skills meant that they had to take an interest in the community and engage with the community members. It can therefore be concluded that a 'Space for Acting and Reflecting', Kolb and Kolb's (2005) sixth educational principle, was created for the students' through being supported by their supervisor to discuss and reflect on their experiences and then apply that learning to practice.



These findings are further strengthened by Parasyn (2005, p. 9) who defines community entry skills as 'a state of openness, observation, listening and sponging, questioning and passively engaging in all that is happening around you'. She believes that the best way to experience a community is to spend time with them and experience it first-hand because quality time and social interaction should develop trust which could become the foundation of a working partnership with the community. In this study this view is depicted in the students' reporting on their social interaction with the community members through engaging in activities that were meaningful to them. The students advised that community entry be approached from a social not professional perspective as this allowed them to develop a working relationship with the community and understand them on a deeper level. It can therefore be concluded that the students' successful engagement in community entry acted as a precursor to the use of community development as a foundation for their practice. This foundation for practice is

described by Lauckner et al., (2007, p. 320) as being ‘process oriented, focussing on collaboration and building partnerships’. They assert that continuous interaction and discussion between the community members and the OT is a necessary part of the process of community development. Similarly, Buchanan and Cloete (2006) state that if students are facilitated to understand the principles and skills of community entry they will then begin to develop their competence to work effectively using community development in community contexts.

5.2.2 Role of the OT in the community

Galvaan (2006, p. 105) states that learning within role-emerging settings that results in progressive understandings and insights involves: ‘thoughtful consideration of facts and perspectives; seeking alternative ways of viewing the community; discussing possible outcomes of various choices; and sometimes experiencing the consequences of unconsidered choices’. She believes that through this process of learning and in the outcomes that the students’ experience, social change becomes evident to them. This process of learning for social change is depicted in the category of ‘With all the issues, what is the priority?’ in which the students’ experiences in considering the needs of the community, viewing and prioritising these needs according to the perspectives of the community members, and discussing possible solutions to the identified needs are viewed. From the findings of the study it is evident that the students’ were overwhelmed at the wide array of needs that presented in the community following their needs assessment, some of which they considered to be more important than others.

The students expressed that being guided by their supervisor to consider the needs from the community's perspective and assisting them to link needs together allowed them to view the priority problems in the community holistically. These findings are supported by Broderick (2004) who states that it is important and sometimes difficult for the OT to balance their own perceived priorities with those that are considered as priority to the community and that it is necessary from the beginning to be consistent with the community's involvement in the process of community development. These findings are furthermore supported by one of Whiteford's (2000) three dimensions that she proposes OT's need to think about in order to affect social change in communities. This dimension emphasises that OT's should think and act at a broader social and cultural level in order to advocate against social and institutional structures and policies that inhibit people from full occupational participation. This is evident in the findings through students' sharing that being able to view the community holistically allowed them to see how the priority problems impacted on the community and at what level they could intervene.

Along with the students' own perception of what the priorities in the community were, came their need to be the ones to address the problems of the community as they felt that they would be able to provide a solution faster rather than to work at the pace of the community. The findings show that the students' realised that one of the benefits of community entry is the relationship that is established with the community in order to include them in the Community Process by working with the community and not for them. This process is described by Galvaan (2006) as the principle of self-determination, in which students should learn to work with

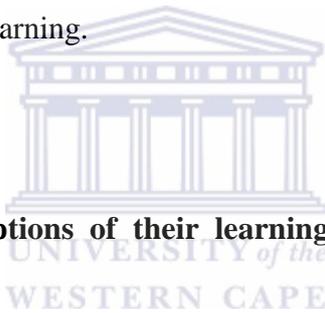
the community on their self-identified problems rather than attempt to ‘fix’ problems they consider to be priority based on their own professional insights. Lauckner et al., (2007) supports this by stating that community participation is essential in the process of community development as communities should be considered as the main agents of social change alongside the professional.

The students in this study had the perception that the process of community participation as part of community development meant that their contributions to the community would not be as significant as they would like them to be. The students regarded their supervisor’s encouragement that their contribution to the community is significant regardless of how small it may seem as an important factor in understanding their role. This is supported by Galvaan (2006) who states that it is important for students placed in role-emerging settings to acknowledge their invaluable contribution to the community regardless of its impact. She adds that if students are facilitated to appreciate their input in the community then they begin to recognise the potential they hold to contribute towards social change. This is evident in the study when one student expressed that in their last week in the community, as they were saying their goodbyes, she realised the great impact they as students had on the community and the impact the community had on them in return. It can therefore be deduced that the supervisors facilitation of the students’ learning about the importance and use of community entry, coupled with their ability to consider, view and address the needs of the community from a community perspective allowed the students’ to progress to a point where they were able to acknowledge and feel proud of the contribution they made to the community.

This finding presents strong links to the category of ‘Doing things we never thought we were capable of’ as it shows the potential that students’ felt they had developed during their community fieldwork placement. From this perspective it can be concluded that in order for the student to be able to establish a relationship with the community and to be able to consider, view and address the needs of the community, the supervisor should be able to do the same in order to facilitate this process. This is evident in the supervisors’ engagement with and understanding of the community members as highlighted in Chapter 3. This is supported by Bradley et al., (2008) who believes that supervisors should also be aware of and be activists against the social injustices that face clients and that occur in communities while simultaneously teaching the student to do the same. Furthermore, in aligning with the significance of this study, the concept of the supervisor as advocate for the community and the facilitation of students’ ability to recognize occupational injustices that occur in communities as highlighted in the study, is a vital link for OT curriculum to consider in facilitating occupation-based community practice in their undergraduate programmes both in teaching and fieldwork education.

From the findings it is suggested that the aforementioned learning experiences of the students allowed them to realise that they as professionals were not in charge of the community development process and that their role as OT’s in the community was based on what the community needed and not what they wished to provide. These findings are substantiated by Lauckner et al., (2007) who suggests that the role of the OT in community development is constantly shifting and changing and that coming to understand the evolving nature of this role is a

repetitive process. Based on the experiences of the students', the findings suggest that their learning occurred through a problem-based approach in which they were required to find solutions to problems they encountered in the Community Process. In addition they considered options and perspectives they were faced with when working in the community, and continuously assessed their roles, actions and interventions in consultation with the community. This is further supported by Martin et al., (2004) who asserts that problem-based learning allows students to deal with real problems by reasoning through a process of understanding where their own gaps in knowledge exist, discovering solutions to problems without having access to the answer and enhancing their independence and confidence in their learning.



5.3 Students' perceptions of their learning with regards to occupation based practice

The findings in this study suggest that students' experienced that the various aspects of occupation included in their process of learning centralised occupation as a key aspect of the Community Process both in the academic and practical aspects of their community fieldwork. The theme 'The big word 'Occupation' accentuates the shift in the students' understanding of occupation from an individual to a community perspective. The data suggests that this shift allowed the students to refine and understand the role of an OT in the community by linking their understanding of community development to the philosophy of occupation. The students' perceptions of their learning with regards to occupation

based practice will be discussed in terms of their experiences of the subjective nature of occupation, and their understanding of the occupational nature of the community.

5.3.1 The subjective nature of occupation

Pierce (2001) states that occupation and activity are two of the core concepts of the occupational therapy profession that is in need of differentiation as they are often used interchangeably causing inconsistency in its use within practice. She argues that occupation and activity are two diverse concepts that each holds separate meanings and strengths and asserts that being able to distinguish between occupation and activity is important to OT professional's as this means that the power of their interventions will be enhanced. This process of distinguishing between activity and occupation is depicted in the findings of the study in which the students' expressed how being asked by their supervisor what they understand about the differences between an activity and an occupation, being encouraged to read about these differences, and having discussions in tutorials assisted them in clarifying the confusion that they felt existed between the two concepts. This is supported by Lorenzo and Alsop (2006) who believe that discussing and debating challenging questions or concepts as a student group promotes learning and professional development. They add that through this process of discussion and debate with their supervisor, new perspectives of practice can be developed for both the student and the supervisor. Similarly, Mason (1998) asserts that it is important for the supervisor to facilitate students sharing their experiences and learning in a group learning environment as this supports the professions value of

team work and reflection on practice. It is evident from these findings that the supervisor 'Began their Learning with the Students Experience of the Subject' as highlighted as Kolb and Kolb's (2005) second educational principle for the promotion of positive learning experiences. They assert that this process allows students to explore what they already know and to re-examine and modify this into new understandings which promote the students value of their learning experience.

The findings of this study reinforces the role that this form of learning has in assisting students to consolidate their understanding of the concept of occupation in occupational therapy. This was evident in the students' perception that being asked by their supervisor to give examples of occupations from their own lives allowed them to understand occupation from a personal perspective which made the concept of occupation more meaningful to them. Pierce (2001) states that the key to differentiating between occupation and activity is the concept of subjectivity as occupations are distinct experiences of a person while activities are more general. Likewise, Leclair (2010) states that even though there is no consensus on a universal definition of occupation within the profession, many definitions share the belief that occupation is experienced by the individual and is therefore subjective. This philosophy was explained by Wilcock (2000) in her coining of the phrase 'humans as occupational beings', in which she emphasised that occupation is vital for the health and well-being of individuals and communities. She believes that OT's should adopt this philosophy as it would expand their practice to include not only dysfunction but a focus on health from an occupational perspective for all people and communities.

From this perspective, the findings confirm that coming to understand themselves as occupational beings allowed the students' to establish a foundation for their learning about occupation from a subjective to a community perspective. This view is consistent with that of Fieldhouse and Fedden (2009) who state that the process of self-directed learning in role-emerging settings begins with students developing an appreciation of themselves as occupational beings and that this aspect of learning has been advocated as an essential starting point in students developing an understanding of how occupational therapy 'works'. They add that once students grasp this concept it allows them to interpret their experiences and create their own understandings of knowledge rather than to simply gather information. This they state, is a characteristic of deep learning within a problem-based learning approach. It can therefore be concluded that the students' learning about occupation from a subjective to a community perspective is in line with Whiteford's (2000) first dimension that OT's need to consider to affect social change in communities, which is that they need to adopt an occupational perspective by viewing the world through 'occupational eyes' in order to consider the occupational needs of people as individuals and as members of society. This is evident in the study through the student that described how having this understanding of occupation from a subjective to a community perspective will allow them to be 'Occu-centric' in their written work as well as their practical interaction with the community. Another student expressed how this understanding allowed her to view the needs of the community from an occupational perspective.

5.3.2 The occupational nature of the community

The findings revealed that the students' experiences in coming to understand the concept of occupational engagement had been through discussing the aspects of doing, being and becoming. The students explain that during a tutorial they were asked by their supervisor to each give an example of something they do. Some of their examples were driving, reading and studying. Wilcock (1999) states that doing seems to be synonymous with the OT profession as it holds the essence of occupation. The students were then asked to think about their doing example and reflect on what it means to them personally. This is synonymous with Wilcock's (1999, p.5) view that the process of doing that defines occupation involves more emphasis on the self which leads to the concept of being as it requires that people have time to 'discover themselves, to think, to reflect and to simply exist' in what they are doing. The students were then asked by their supervisor to share their insights gained from the reflection (being) of their doing and how this could lead to change in their lives. This process is described by Wilcock (1999) as becoming which she states holds the notions of potential, growth, transformation and self-actualisation as it adds to the concept of a sense of the future.

The students expressed that discussing what each concept meant individually and then being facilitated to understand how they fit together assisted them in learning about how transformation occurs through occupational engagement. These findings confirm that the students' understanding of the concept of occupational engagement allowed them to consolidate their learning with regards to transformation through occupation. This is supported by Wilcock (1999) who

asserts that it is important for OT's to understand and act on the concept of enabling occupation (doing, being and becoming) as it is vital to the occupational health and well-being of individuals and communities.

The findings expressed the students' concern about how their ability to determine each individual's occupations in the community. This is evident in their questioning how the concept of enabling occupation can be applied from an individual to a community perspective. Some of the students in the study expressed feeling overwhelmed by the concepts of occupational justice and shared occupations that were part of the discussions in an attempt to address their concerns in the tutorials. All students reported that their learning around of the occupational nature of communities allowed them to further strengthen their understanding of their role of the OT in the community as it linked with their understanding of community development. The students' furthermore expressed that the use of a diagram (See Figure 5) which their supervisor used to discuss and show the links between the concepts related to the occupational nature of communities allowed them to recognise the occupational injustices that occur in the community and together with the community identify the occupational risk factors that occur as a result of those injustices.

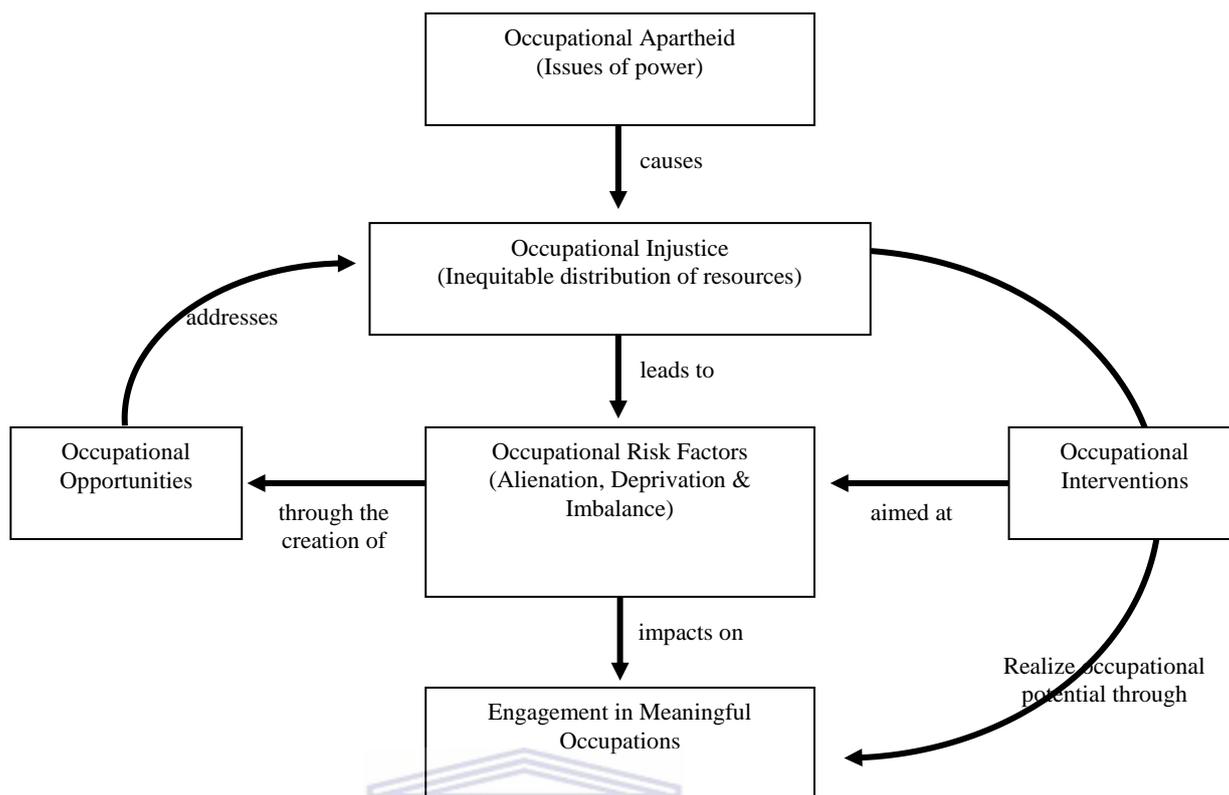
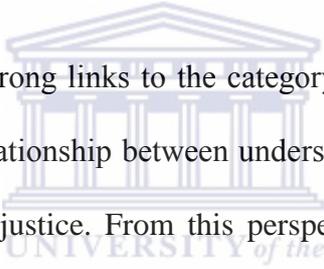


Figure 5: Diagram illustrating the occupational nature of communities

The students conveyed that coming to understand these links allowed them to realise that their intervention in the community would address the occupational risk factors through the use of health promotion and community development principles in order to create opportunities that could affect change in the community. These findings are validated by Leclair (2010) who states occupational justice relates to the occupational nature of individuals and communities and their right to participate in meaningful and purposeful occupations. Furthermore, she is of the opinion that when working towards occupational justice from a community perspective, OT's need to build on their ability to work cooperatively and in partnership with the community. It is evident that through the facilitation of this learning for the students, their supervisor was able to 'Make Space for the Development of Expertise' highlighted as Kolb and

Kolb's (2005) fifth educational principle for the promotion of positive learning experiences by allowing students to organise facts and ideas into a conceptual framework which they will be able to apply and transfer into different contexts. From these findings it can be deduced that the students' learning about the occupational nature of communities can be linked to Whiteford's (2000) third dimension that she proposes OT's need to consider in order to affect social change in communities which is the need for OT's to embrace the concept of occupational justice in order to advocate for resources which aims to create occupationally 'just' societies based on people's needs and rights to engage in occupations.



These findings present strong links to the category of 'The power of community entry' as it shows the relationship between understanding the community and the concept of occupational justice. From this perspective it can be concluded that their supervisor's facilitation of the students' ability to understand and apply community entry allowed them to gain the trust and acceptance of the community through sharing stories and experiences which was vital for truly understanding the community and their ability to identify the occupational injustices evident in the community. This is evident in the findings through one student expressing how she learnt the importance of putting herself in the shoes of the community and building personal relationships. She declares that her previous understanding was simply about getting to know a client in order to provide intervention whereas now she realises the importance of understanding every aspect of your clients or communities in order to see how they are affected by the injustices they experience. The findings of this study with regard to the students' ability to recognise the occupational injustices that occur in communities, furthermore

speaks to Wilcock's (2000) question regarding how, in content and method, through establishing links between community entry and occupational justice, OT education programs reflect the importance of occupation in health for individuals and communities as highlighted in the significance of this study (refer to Chapter 1).

The students in the study felt that developing their understanding of where and how occupation linked to the community led them to reflect on their initial perceptions of the community and how their further reflections on occupation from a community perspective allowed them to change their views and perspectives. This is depicted in the findings through a student expressing how her initial impression of the youth of the community was that they were lazy and did not want to work. She adds that upon reflection she realised that she had failed to see the connection between the occupational risk factors and the condition of the community. This process of reflection is supported by Lauckner's et al., (2007) study on the experiences of OT's in community development. They highlight that in order to understand community development from an OT perspective the OT's in the study had to go through a process of repetitive questioning and evaluation that involved reflection. Kinsella (2001) describes reflective practice as a cycle in which the meaning of concrete experiences are theorised about and new understandings are tested in practice. She states that the factors that promote reflective practice include being aware of the context in which practice occurs, questioning assumptions related to that area of practice and adopting a self-directed learning approach. From the study it is evident that these factors present themselves in the students' experiences during community fieldwork which

supports Lauckner's et al., (2007) statement that the facilitation of these factors in students could assist their preparation for practice as OT's in community development.

The findings of the study bring to light that the students' learning about occupation from an individual to a community perspective allowed them to centralise occupation in the academic and practical aspects of their community fieldwork. One student in the study referred to this concept as being 'occu-centric' in the Community Process. The students' perceptions of being 'occu-centric' meant that they had to understand how to use occupation within the process of community development as well as part of the outcome of community development as most of their perceptions rested on only having an occupational outcome. This 'occu-centric' view is supported by Lauckner's et al., (2007) view that the emphasis of community development is on the process of community engagement rather than a focus on the outcome as this results in the community becoming actively involved in addressing the issues that affect them.

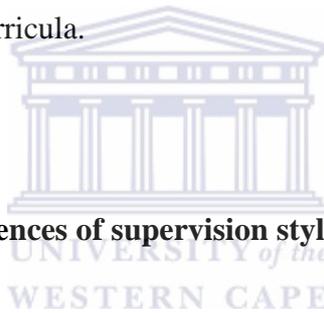
Students in the study mentioned that understanding the concept of using occupation as part of the process and end product meant understanding the concept of occupation as a means and as an end. They expressed that engaging in discussion with their supervisor about the concept of occupation as a means and as an end, making use of practical examples to consolidate their understanding and being encouraged to read about this concept allowed them to deepen their understanding of occupation-based practice. The development of the students'

understanding of occupation as a means and an end is supported by Nixon and Creek (2006), who state that professionals generally deliberate between using occupation as means or end in deciding upon the best course of intervention. They further assert that individual or community needs should be addressed in a manner that occupation as a means and as an end are considered in relation to each other as they are not independent of each other. This is supported by Price and Miner (2007), who maintain that interactions with clients or communities as part of the process of occupational intervention allow for movement towards occupational outcomes, and that both process and end product are important aspects of occupation-based practice. This is evident in one student expressing how she came to understand that having an end product within the project is equally as important as the process that the community needs to go through in order to get to the end product.



The students felt that having an understanding of the occupational nature of communities and knowing how to centralise occupation within community development is important knowledge for all OT professionals to have as this could contribute to the profession's ability to identify the occupational injustices that occur in communities. This view is consistent with Lauckner et al., (2007, p. 319) who states that community development from an OT perspective can be understood as a 'multi-layered, community driven process in which relationships are developed and the community's capacity is strengthened, in order to effect social change in the community that will promote the community's access and ability to engage in occupations'. It can therefore be concluded that the students' learning about occupation from an individual to a community perspective, their

understanding of the occupational nature of communities and the importance of using occupation as a means and as an end product is validated by Whiteford's (2000) third dimension that she proposes OT's need to consider in order to affect social change in communities, which is the need for OT's to embrace the concept of occupational justice in order to advocate for resources which aims to create occupationally 'just' societies based on people's needs and rights to engage in occupations. In reflecting back on the significance of the study (see Chapter 1) these findings show how an occupation focus is included into the teaching and supervision of students in community setting as per the call from the WFOT revised minimum standards (Hocking & Ness, 2002) to centralise occupation in all components of OT curricula.



5.4 Students' experiences of supervision styles and methods

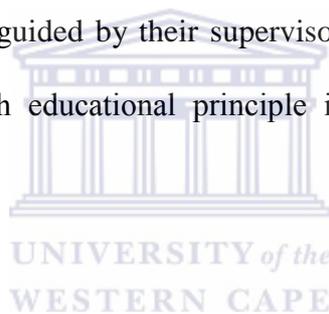
The findings in this study reflect the students' experiences with regards to various techniques and approaches used within the supervision of their community fieldwork placement. The study also reports on the students' experiences of their learning about how theory informs practice in a community setting. The data from the theme 'The fundamental aspects of learning' suggests that the students came to understand the importance of academic reading and reflective practice as a core component in continuing their professional development. The students' experiences of supervision styles and methods will be discussed in terms of their experiences of the styles, techniques and approaches used within their

supervision, their experiences of theory informing practice and their experiences with regards to academic reading and reflective practice.

5.4.1 Supervision styles, techniques and approaches

Duncan and Joubert (2006) define tutorials as a teaching period given to a group of students by an 'expert' professional with the aim of facilitating the integration of theory into practice, improving knowledge about a specific topic, clarifying thoughts or ideas and promoting learning through debate and discussion. One factor that was consistently evident in the findings of the study is the value that the students placed on the tutorials and discussions in their learning about community focused OT and occupation-based practice. The students' emphasised that being able to discuss their fieldwork experiences and share their learning within tutorials allowed them the opportunity to evaluate their own professional development and encouraged them to take more responsibility for their learning. This finding is supported by Wiemer's (1994) statement that if students are given the opportunity to express their thoughts and opinions, and are encouraged to think freely and debate various issues that arise within their fieldwork, they accept this as an indication that their supervisor acknowledges their learning. Wiemer (1994) is furthermore of the opinion that this motivates students to be more directed in their learning. Similarly, Steele-Smith and Armstrong (2001) state that student driven tutorials are a strategy of self-directed learning in which students are encouraged to share their experiences and learning.

The sharing of students' experiences and learning during tutorials was evident throughout the findings. One student mentioned that she felt proud to be able to share her learning with her peers and that she found it interesting and challenging that even though their views differed they could still learn from each other. Consistent with this finding is Steele-Smith and Armstrong's (2001) view that peer learning allows students to share their newly acquired skills and knowledge thereby reinforcing their own learning and reasoning while at the same time reducing the fear of being asked questions and receiving guidance as it comes from their fellow peers. It can therefore be concluded that students need to be provided with a space in which they can take responsibility for their own learning which is supported and guided by their supervisor. This is consistent with Kolb and Kolb's (2005) ninth educational principle in promoting positive learning experiences for students.

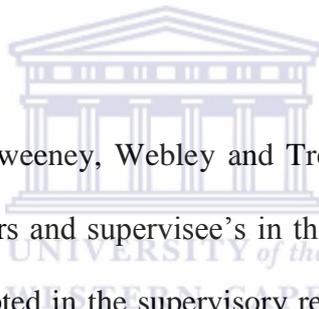


From the data collected in the study it is evident that even though students in the beginning of their fieldwork placement were anxious about living and working with fellow students, working within groups with their fellow students was valuable to them as it allowed them to share their learning and their experiences, discuss their problems and together come up with possible solutions as well as work collectively on the Community Process. This finding is reinforced by Martin and Edwards (1998) who states that students who work in groups learn to identify problems, delegate learning tasks and discuss knowledge and challenges with their peers. Furthermore, they are of the opinion that students, who are educated in this manner become therapists' who are capable of thinking for themselves and who have developed the means to become lifelong learners.

From the findings it is evident that students found the supervisors use of laymen's terms, analogies, diagrams and illustrations useful in increasing their understanding of various concepts related to community focused OT and occupation-based practice in a community setting. All of the abovementioned aspects can be identified as strategies that are highlighted in the Four-Quadrant Model (4QM) of Facilitated Learning (Greber et al., 2007b) that can be used by facilitators to meet the needs of students. The use of laymen's terms is a strategy that is identified in Quadrant 1 as 'Explicit instruction and explanation'. Greber et al., (2007b) state that this strategy provides students with a direct description of a task or concept. They argue that because the effectiveness of this strategy depends on how the instruction is provided by the supervisor and interpreted by the student, it is vital that there is a balance between the simplicity of the language and the specifics of the content. This is highlighted in the study through one student's statement when she said that "simple words made all the theory around meaningful occupation more real and less out there".

The use of analogies, described in the findings through a student's account of using tying shoelaces to explain the concept of enablement, is identified as a strategy termed 'Mnemonics' in Quadrant 3 of the 4QM of Facilitated Learning (Greber et al., 2007b). Mnemonics is used to increase students' capacity to store and retrieve information linked to concepts, processes, facts and procedural steps. Greber et al., (2007b) state that mnemonics includes the use of linking words, acronyms, nonsense phrases and rhymes that must have contextual or personal relevance. The students' reported that they felt that the use of diagrams and illustrations assisted them in applying theory to practice making it a more tangible

experience thereby allowing them to be more thorough in the Community Process. According to Greber et al., (2007b) this strategy is described as the use of ‘Visual Cues’ which also falls into Quadrant 3 of the 4QM. Visual strategies include the use of mind maps, graphic organisers, visual displays and computer generated images that students can use to either recall steps or prompt action. One student commented that she found it helpful that her supervisor ‘likes to think in pictures’ as it assisted her in formulating concepts. This is strengthened by Kolb and Kolb’s (2005) fifth educational principle, which emphasises the need that students should be assisted in formulating facts into conceptual frameworks so that they are able to use that knowledge in practice.

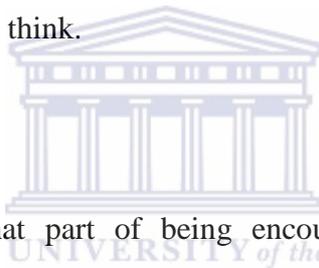


A study conducted by Sweeney, Webley and Treacher (2001) that explored the experiences of supervisors and supervisee’s in the OT profession, found that the style of supervision adopted in the supervisory relationship has an impact on the outcome supervision process. They advise that supervisors should adopt a middle ground approach in their supervision by being neither overly directive nor overly passive. Hummel (1997) agrees with this perspective by stating that the deciding factor of effective or ineffective fieldwork supervision is the student/supervisor relationship. Similarly, Bonello (2001b) asserts that an authoritarian teaching or supervision approach in which students do not actively participate in their learning has no place in higher education. These views are depicted in the findings where the students expressed the importance of the student supervisor relationship. The students’ felt that it was important that they be able to communicate openly with their supervisor in a relationship that was benevolent in which the supervisor encouraged their learning and was also open to learning from students. Yerxa

(1994, p. 187) believes that the ‘essential key to effective supervision is the establishment and maintenance of communication’. She is of the opinion that the success of effective communication depends on both the supervisor and the student contributing equally in a two-way open communication process. Similarly, Fieldhouse and Fedden (2009) state that a mutual teaching-learning relationship between student and supervisor allows students to become active problems solvers as it highlights the strengths of individual students learning styles while at the same time developing habits for lifelong learning and continuous professional development.

The students in this study expressed the value they held towards being encouraged to learn by their supervisor. One student expressed that her supervisor always pushed her to think about things more which allowed her to discover more about herself and to reach her occupational potential in her learning. These findings are supported by Hummel’s (1997) study that explored OT students perceptions of the characteristics of effective fieldwork supervisors which found that effective fieldwork supervisors encouraged students to take responsibility for their learning, pushed students to develop their reasoning for their actions based on a theoretical background and encouraged students to expand their areas of professional development. The findings of the study show that students considered part of their encouraging environment provided by their supervisor to contain a space where they could be themselves, engage with their supervisor on a personal level, have fun while learning and learn at their own pace. This is strengthened by a study conducted by Mulholland et al., (2006) that examined OT students’ perspectives of effective supervisor characteristics which found supervisor traits of

friendliness, a relaxed manner, patience and a sense of humor to be desirable aspects of fieldwork supervision. These findings are furthermore supported by Kolb and Kolb's (2005) fourth educational principle for the promotion of positive learning experiences identified as 'Making Spaces for Conversational Learning' which they state allows students the opportunity for reflection on and meaning making of their learning experiences thereby enhancing experiential learning. This is evident in the study through one student who expressed that she appreciated that she was able to connect with her supervisor on a personal level and that the student supervisor relationship was not formal and stiff. She also shared that she felt she was able to be 'silly and zainy' while still learning at her own pace and always being stimulate to think.



Students also shared that part of being encouraged to learn and assuming responsibility for their learning was their supervisors' knowledge and passion about occupation-based community practice. They felt that this further motivated them to what to learn and to be excited about what they were learning. This is evident through one student sharing how she did not understand why her supervisor would say that the whole concept of occupation gives her goose bumps. She reports that through further discussion and reading she came to believe that they as OT's are actually dealing with the very fabric of life, without which people would not develop in all aspects of their lives. From these findings it can be deduced that their supervisor was able to provide the students with a foundation for their motivation and energy use within their learning through being a role model for the profession in the context of community focused OT which is

in line with one of Yerxa's (1994) key functions of the role of a supervisor for effective supervision.

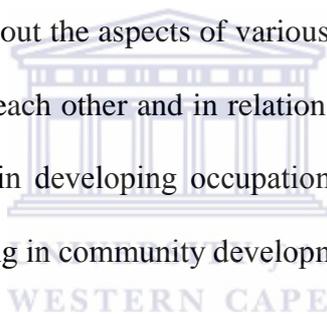
The students expressed that even though they found it frustrating at times, they grew to understand the importance and value of a supervisor that facilitated and encouraged students to find answers to questions themselves rather than just being given the answers. The students felt that this allowed them to learn at their own pace while still being challenged to develop personally and professionally. These findings are strengthened by Hummel's (1997) study that found that effective fieldwork supervisors facilitate, collaborate and guide students learning, allowing them to take responsibility for their actions and directing their thinking in answering questions so that students can learn to think for themselves. Nye (2003) validates this view in stating that supervisors need to endure the uncertainty that arises in the students in the absence of answers as it is important that questions must be posed rather than answers provided through encouraging students to look for information and understanding. She further believes that supervisors must provide a safe space for students in which a balance between challenge and support in the student supervisor relationship must exist. She is also of the opinion that students must be challenged to use and develop their own resources within their learning but that supervisors need to remember that students will only make use of this opportunity if they have confidence that their supervisor will support them.

From these findings it is evident that their supervisor was able to provide a ‘Space for ‘Students to take Charge of their Learning’ which is noted as Kolb and Kolb’s (2005) ninth educational principle for the promotion of positive learning experiences which, as they state, allows students to take control and responsibility for their learning thereby enhancing their ability to learn from their experiences. This is evident in the findings through one student stating that during a conversation with her fellow house mates she had a light bulb moment where she realised that there is no one fixed definition of occupation and that as a final year student she should attempt to establish a personal definition of what occupation is because it would assist her in strengthening her understanding of what OT means to her in the community. Furthermore, in linking with the significance of the study (refer to Chapter 1), the findings of this study show the supervisors use of a variety of teaching and learning strategies and methods that OT undergraduate programs could consider in the supervision of students learning about occupation-based community practice in community settings.

5.4.2 Theory informing practice

According to Banks et al., (2000) OT practice requires the application of OT knowledge to define and guide the decisions, actions and techniques of its therapists. In their study that examined the perceptions of OT students’ ability to integrate and apply theory in fieldwork settings, they found that the fieldwork learning environment of students and the approach that the supervisor took towards facilitating their learning influenced the students’ ability to integrate and apply theory in practice. In this study the category of ‘That thing called theory’

highlights the students coming to understand the importance of theory as part of their learning and professional development in a community setting. The students expressed the value in firstly developing their understanding of a variety of models, theories and frames of reference as well as their relevance, application and similarities and differences before using the theory to guide practice in their community fieldwork. The findings reinforces Scaletti's (1999) view that it is important for OT's not only to understand theories directly related to OT but also theories related to community development as this allows the practitioner to promote the link between OT and community development and as such become an advocate for change. The findings are further supported by Leclair's (2010, p. 19) view that thinking about the aspects of various models, theories and frames of references in relation to each other and in relation to communities, is vital as it is an 'important first step in developing occupation-based models of practice that will support OT's working in community development'.



The students in the study reported that having discussions with their supervisor in tutorials about theory and where and how it fits into the Community Process, being asked by their supervisor to explore whether theory guides practice or practice guides theory, and linking all of their learning about theory to their fieldwork experiences, allowed them to see how theory informs practice, making it more 'real' to them. These findings are strengthened by Yerxa's (1994) view that supervisors have to compel students to apply their theoretical knowledge to their practical experiences. She further states that one of the methods of doing so is for the supervisor to ask appropriate leading questions that requires the student to make use of their thought processes in bridging the gap between theory and

practice, allowing the supervisor to lead the students' thoughts in the same direction as theirs. One student in the study explains how she had thought she formulated an understanding of a concept when her supervisor asked her a question that made her think. Greber et al., (2007b) describe the questioning of students to involve the strategies of 'Lower order questions' identified in Quadrant 1 and 'Higher order questions' identified in Quadrant 2 of the 4QM of Facilitated Learning. Lower order questions are used by the supervisor to assess the students' level of understanding while higher order questions are used to facilitate the students consideration of other factors related to the topic at hand.

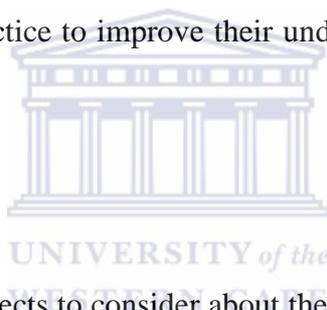
According to Lorenzo and Buchanan (2006, p. 93) when students see theory being applied in practice they experience 'aha' moments that allows them to understand their role more clearly and enables their professional development. This is evident in the study where one student described how listing the problems of the community and linking them together allowed her to see the cause and effect of problems in the community and made her realise that one project could address a variety of needs within the community. This is supported by Banks et al., (2000) who assert that the process of experiencing theory in practice allows students to become reflective practitioners and call attention to the importance for students to use OT theory as a tool for developing their thinking.

5.4.3 Academic reading and reflective practice

The findings of the study showed that the students' came to understand the link between academic reading and reflective practice through their supervisor encouraging and giving them literature and theory to read related to their community fieldwork placement, guiding them to see how it fits into their community fieldwork experience and motivating them to reflect on their new understandings in their fieldwork journals. These findings are reinforced by Fone's (2006) statement that it is the supervisor's role to stimulate the skill of reflection in students through the use of discussion, debriefing, lower and higher order questions, encouraging clinical reasoning and narrative thinking and through the use of reflective journaling and academic reading. The students' expressed that even though initially they considered academic reading to be a non-desirable activity, their discussions and experiences motivated them to want to know more, resulting in an increase in their own initiative and interest to read. The students' further acknowledged that they came to value the importance of academic reading, as it allowed them to develop their ability to integrate theory into practice thereby improving their professional development.

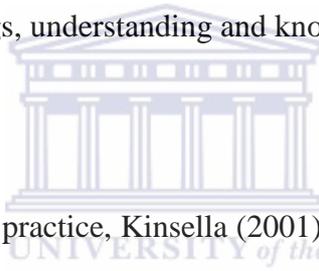
These findings are similar to that of a study conducted by Dettlaff and Wallace (2002) where they examined students' perceptions of the use of a fieldwork journal that required literature to be connected to the students' fieldwork experiences in order to improve their integration of theory into practice. The study found that students benefitted from reviewing literature from a variety of sources in that it increased their knowledge base and that using this literature in their

journals allowed them to consider new ways of practice that they had not previously considered, understood or been exposed to. Furthermore, the study highlights that incorporating literature into their journals allowed students to recognise the importance of evaluation and reflection in order to improve their professional development. This is evident in the study through one student who expressed that she came to realise the importance of understanding theory and academic reading as it not only allows you to integrate theory into practice but that it allows theory to become ‘real’. It can therefore be concluded that through their supervisor’s facilitation, guidance, feedback and encouragement, the students’ developed their ability to understand the importance of theory in practice and to use reflective practice to improve their understanding of occupation-based community practice.



One of the most vital aspects to consider about the findings of this study is that all of the data was grounded in the community fieldwork reflections of the 2009 final year OT students. The findings are based on the students’ reflections of their immediate learning experiences during community fieldwork through their journals, their retrospective reflections about their learning post community fieldwork through their portfolios, and a verbal reflection about their learning experienced and supervision received through the evaluative focus group at the end of the year (refer to Chapter 3). From this perspective, it can be deduced that reflective practice formed an important part of student learning about community focused OT and occupation-based practice. This is evident in the study where one student expressed that she came to understand the emphasis of reflective writing during the course of the year as it provides them with a space in their busy lives to

sit and reflect on how and what they learnt on a daily basis and how they can use what they learnt in the future. This is supported by Bonello (2001b) who states that in order to learn from experience, reflective practice is required in that it allows students to obtain meaning from their experiences and encourages students to evaluate themselves. Furthermore Alsop (2002) believes that reflection supports learning through reflection-on-action, experiential learning or within critical debate and that it is through thinking about the different perspectives on a situation that allows professionals to make appropriate decisions in practice. She is of the opinion that learning begins with the process of thought, in which current perceptions of experiences are linked to the memories of previous experiences from which new meanings, understanding and knowledge may emerge.



In her work on reflective practice, Kinsella (2001) highlights six considerations as a way for OT's to think about and develop as reflective practitioners. The first consideration is titled 'Learning from our experiences' and highlights Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle of beginning with a concrete experience, reflecting on it, theorising about the meaning of it and testing new understandings in practice as a method of learning and professional development. This consideration is depicted in the findings of the current study through the students' experiences regarding the use of community entry skills. The students reported their difficulties in the use of community entry, they reflected on their theoretical understanding of it versus their practical use of it, they made use of literature in coming to understand that they had to become a part of the community and they tested their new understandings by engaging with the community in a social

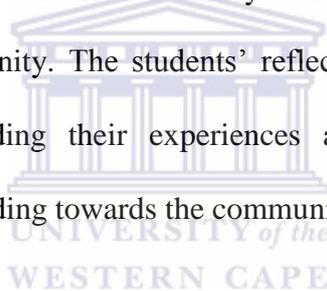
manner. This they expressed allowed them to value the power of community entry and improve their professional development in this regard.

The second consideration is 'Ways of knowing' which Kinsella (2001) believes involves professionals possessing explicit knowledge, knowledge which we can say, and implicit knowledge, knowledge which we cannot say but is revealed in action. She states that it is vital for professionals to examine actions in practice so that we can discover the implicit knowledge that influences what is actually done in practice. This consideration is evident in the current study through the students' experiences of being empathetic versus being sympathetic. The students expressed that they understood that from a professional perspective they needed to be empathetic but that their experiences of the realities of the community caused them to react in a sympathetic manner. Reflecting on this allowed students to identify and develop the best approach to addressing the needs of the community.

'Contexts of practice' is the third consideration which according to Kinsella, (2001) involves reflecting on the contextual factors of the professions clients and communities, the contextual factors of professional practice and the factors that influence both of these. She furthermore states that the insights gained through this type of reflection provide a foundation for action in advocating for clients and social change. This consideration is highlighted in the students' learning about the link between occupation and health and well-being. The students reflected on the high rate of teenage pregnancy in the community and linked it to the lack of resources that led the youth to engage in high risk behaviours. The insights gained

from this allowed the students to understand that their role should focus on providing opportunities for occupational engagement through the advocacy for improved resources in order to decrease high risk behaviours.

The fourth consideration is 'Exploring assumptions' which Kinsella (2001) states is important to do on a regular basis as it will allow professionals to recognise how it influences practice. She believes that this type of reflection has the potential to raise self-awareness allowing professionals to understand their behaviours in practice. The current study depicts this reflection in the students' experiences of coming to realise that they were judgemental towards certain situations in the community. The students' reflection on their personal feelings and assumptions regarding their experiences allowed them to adjust their behaviour and understanding towards the community without being judgmental.



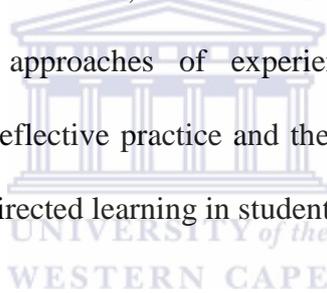
'Theories of practice', the fifth consideration is described by Kinsella (2001) as consisting of espoused theory and theory-in-use. She states that espoused theory is based on the articulated beliefs and values of a professional while theory-in-use is contained in the professional's actions as it is reflected in what they do. Kinsella (2001) asserts that reflective practice requires professionals to examine their espoused theories and their theories-in-use in order to improve professional development as it requires the recognition of the need to change the espoused theory or to change professional behaviours. One student in the study recognised the need to change her theory-in-use as she reflected on the realisation that even though she was doing the studying and as such held all the knowledge, that she

was not the expert in the community and that her professional behaviour had to change to display that understanding.

The final consideration is titled 'Praxis' which Kinsella (2001) defines as the place where reflection and action and where theory and practice meet. She states that in order for professionals to transform and develop, they need to balance the union of reflection and action and more importantly to work from this position as OT's. This perspective is highlighted in the categories of 'That thing called theory' and 'Reading, reflecting and more reading' in which the students' expressed that they recognise the importance of academic reading not only as a student but as a qualified professional and that reflective writing contributes to their immediate and future practices as an OT. The study shows that both of these aspects allowed the students to better integrate theory into practice in their learning about community focused OT and occupation-based practice. It is vital to consider that in order for supervisors to facilitate reflective practice in students that they too need to engage in 'praxis'. Kinsella (2001) states that if reflective practice is used as an approach to professional development then it is likely to benefit both the practitioner and the clients and communities. She adds that using these considerations in practice allows professionals to move towards becoming informed, conscious reflective practitioners.

5.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the discussion of the findings is aligned with the significance of the study (refer to Chapter 1) which was able to emphasize how supervision can contribute towards students understanding occupation-based community practice through highlighting the use of Yerxa's (1994) four key functions for the role of effective supervision, Whiteford's (2000) three dimensions that she proposes OT's should consider in order to affect social change in communities, and Kolb and Kolb's (2005) nine educational principles for the promotion of positive learning experiences. In addition, the discussion emphasized the use of the teaching and learning approaches of experiential learning, problem-based learning, peer learning, reflective practice and the 4QM of facilitated learning in order to encourage self-directed learning in students.

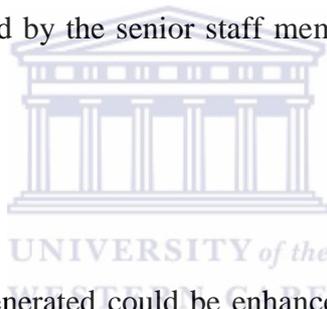


5.5 Limitations of the study

The findings of this research must be considered in light of methodological limitations. The data sources utilized within the study are all learning requirements within the undergraduate OT program at UWC. The 2009 final year students' fieldwork journals and portfolio files (primary data sources) were written by the students with the express purpose of meeting the requirements of their community fieldwork placement and not for the purpose of this research study. This means that the data contained in the fieldwork journals and portfolio

files were written based purely on the students' community fieldwork experiences and their interpretation thereof and was not guided by questions related to the objectives of this research study.

In addition the evaluative focus group (additional data source) is also part of the undergraduate OT program which takes place at the end of the year involving all final year OT students. This group is facilitated by a senior staff member (not the researcher) with the purpose of allowing the students an opportunity to evaluate their process within the community fieldwork component of the undergraduate OT program. The facilitation of this group is therefore not based on the research process nor was it guided by the senior staff member with this research study at hand.



The depth of the data generated could be enhanced by in-depth interviews. This would have allowed a deeper understanding of the 2009 final year students' lived experiences during their community fieldwork placement which would have strengthened the phenomenological approach that was used within this study.

Another limitation is that data was collected from the six students invited to participate in this study from one university (UWC) undergraduate OT program and therefore the findings of this study are specific to this setting and cannot be generalised to other educational settings.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Guidelines for the facilitation and inclusion of occupation-based community practice in community fieldwork education

This study aimed to explore how the 2009 final year UWC OT student's experienced fieldwork supervision during their community fieldwork placement through focusing on their feelings regarding their community fieldwork experience; their perceptions about their learning related to community focused OT during community fieldwork; their perceptions about their learning related to occupation-based practice during community fieldwork; and their experiences of the various supervision styles and methods they were exposed to during community fieldwork. Wilcock (2000) believes that peoples' learning is best fitted to their individual capacity and to what is meaningful to them and that they learn best when the teaching and learning strategies used reflect their individual differences so that they can develop their unique potential. She believes that in order to enact this philosophy teaching and learning methods have to be interactive and participatory, acceptant of differing ideas and points of view and able to be adapted to individual learning needs without adopting an authoritarian stance.

The rationale (refer to Chapter 1) of the study emphasised the need for occupation to be integrated into fieldwork as an integral component of an OT curriculum and for supervisors to pay closer attention to occupation-based practice when supervising students in fieldwork. This need was based on the call to OT education programmes from the WFOT minimum standard (Hocking & Ness, 2002) to centralize occupation in all components of OT curricula. This chapter will highlight the conclusions drawn from the study in order to provide guidelines for the inclusion of occupation in community fieldwork education and for supervisors to facilitate occupation-based practice during fieldwork education.

6.1.1 Self-directed Learning

Even though it has been noted in literature (Fieldhouse & Fedden, 2009) that role emerging placements allow students to develop a deep understanding and to take greater responsibility for their learning, it is vital that this type of learning is facilitated, encouraged and guided by fieldwork supervisors. Ryan (1993) is of the opinion that in order for self-directed learning to be effective, the emphasis of the students learning needs to be on the process of learning as well as the learning of knowledge. He also believes that self-directed learning needs to occur in an integrated, active environment with the students own experiences being central to this learning process. In order for supervisors to facilitate self-directed learning they need to focus on how the student learns as well as what it is that they are required to learn. The supervisor needs to promote a learning environment that encourages and supports students to share their learning and their experiences. With self-directed learning as the goal for students, the supervisor needs to make

use of the teaching and learning approaches of experiential learning, problem-based learning, peer learning and reflective practice. The strategies available in the 4QM of facilitated learning and strategies identified in literature (Fone, 2006; Mulholland et al., 2006; and Mason, 1998) for the effective supervision of students can be used to assist supervisors to facilitate the use of the teaching and learning approaches in order to enhance self-directed learning in students.

6.1.2 Four Key Functions for Effective Supervision

Yerxa (1994) believes that an effective supervisor makes use of supervisory techniques that will, if successful, allow the student to progress beyond the need of their supervisor. She has proposed four key functions that supervisors need to adopt in order to supervise effectively. In the first key function in which supervisors are required to set the stage for the students' motivation and energy use by role modelling a professional, supervisors need to consider the impact that they have on student behaviour and motivation. A supervisor who presents a high level of professional competency, enthusiasm and certainty regarding the context of the supervision and for supervision itself will allow students to be inspired to follow in the same direction. The second key function which requires supervisors to teach more than facts needs supervisors to move beyond classroom teaching to an arena where students are facilitated to understanding the underlying core competencies and attitudes and ethical behaviours of their fieldwork experiences.

The third key function requires supervisors to provide support to students which exceed purely academic support by creating safe environments in which students feel supported, acknowledged, encouraged and respected in their learning. It is important that fieldwork supervisors are able to be dynamic and adaptable based on the fieldwork environment and the learning needs and expectations of their students. Finally, the fourth key function is for supervisors to provide students with a reliable and measurable method of evaluating their performance which can go beyond the academic requirements of the fieldwork placement and can include methods such as personal learning objectives. Including students into the evaluation of their performance allows them to assume a greater responsibility for their learning and allows them, with their supervisor, to know how and where to change their learning. It is important for supervisors to note that Yerxa's (1994) four key functions are interrelated and as such cannot operate independently of each other. Therefore in order to provide effective supervision, all four of Yerxa's (1994) key functions need to be utilised by supervisors simultaneously.

6.1.3 Being 'Occu-centric' in Teaching and Practice

It is Townsend and Wilcock's (2004) belief that OT exists as a profession to address occupational injustice. However, in order for this to become a reality occupational justice must be more consciously incorporated into OT curricula in teaching and in practice. It is therefore vital for supervisors to facilitate students to recognise the occupational injustices that occur in communities. The foundation of this is for supervisors to centralise occupation (be 'occu-centric') within their teaching and practice and within the supervision of students' academic and

practical learning requirements. Four components can be used by supervisors to facilitate students' ability to identify occupational injustices and enable occupational justice in communities. According to Townsend and Wilcock (2004) this is consistent with activism for clients and communities. The first component involves supervisors facilitating students understanding of themselves as occupational beings. Fieldhouse and Fedden (2009) believe that this aspect of learning is an essential starting point in students developing an understanding of how occupational therapy 'works'.

The second component involves supervisors facilitating the students understanding of the occupational nature of communities. This understanding will allow students to identify the occupational risk factors that occur as a result of the impact of occupational injustice on communities and the opportunities that can be created in order to address those occupational risk factors. The third component involves supervisors facilitating the students' understanding of the importance and use of community entry in establishing and building trusting relationships with the community so that they are able to understand the unique potential and needs of individuals and communities. It is only through truly understanding the potential and needs of a community that students are able to work with and not for the community in identifying and addressing the goals for the community through occupational participation. The fourth component involves supervisors facilitating the students' understanding of occupation as part of the process of occupational intervention as well as part of the end product of occupational intervention. It is vital for students to understand that occupation as a means and as an end are important aspects of occupation-based practice.

6.1.4 Supervisors as Advocates for Social Change

Paul-Ward (2009, p. 82) believes that OT educators and supervisors should take up a more active occupational justice role in the training of students as each individual success contributes towards the social change of clients and communities when they are empowered to advocate for themselves and for others. It is therefore important for supervisors to act as advocates for social change by having an understanding of advocacy as well as putting advocacy into action. Supervisors' actions as an advocate will role model advocacy for students. In order for supervisors to be advocates, they need to be aware of and willing to stand against the occupational injustices that occur "when participation in occupation is barred, confined, restricted, segregated, prohibited, undeveloped, disrupted, alienated, marginalised, exploited, excluded, or otherwise restricted (Townsend & Wilcock, 2004, as cited in Paul-Ward, 2009). It is also the responsibility of the supervisor to teach the student to identify and actively stand against occupational injustices. As discussed in the previous section, being aware of occupational injustice in communities requires a true understanding of the community. Therefore in order to recognise the occupational injustices that occur in communities and in order to be able to advocate against it as well as teach the students to do the same, requires that the supervisor have a true understanding of the community. This can be achieved by engaging in partnership with the communities that supervision takes place in through sharing stories and experiences in order to build trust and acceptance so that supervisor, student and community can be agents of social change through creating opportunities and experiences and unlocking the community's potential for change.

6.1.5 Supervisors as Reflective Practitioners

Kinsella (2001) believes that in order for professionals to transform and develop, they need to balance the union of reflection and action and more importantly to work from this position as OT's. Similarly, in order for fieldwork supervisors to transform and develop their role as a supervisor, they need to balance the union of reflection and the use of their supervision styles and methods and then adjust their supervision practices to effectively facilitate students learning during fieldwork education. In using the teaching and learning approach of self-directed learning, Yerxa's (1994) four key functions, being 'occu-centric in teaching and practice, and being an advocate for social change, supervisors need to engage in reflection and action in order to support their roles as effective fieldwork supervisors. Reflection requires supervisors to engage in academic reading so that they can support themselves and their students in facilitating learning. Reflection can occur on any experience, but if supervisors deliberately and thoroughly reflect and act as an integral part of supervision practice, they may be able to provide insights into supervision that will transform fieldwork education.

6.1.6 The Three-tier System for the Facilitation of Occupation-based Community Practice

The aspects highlighted above as guidelines for the inclusion of occupation in community fieldwork education and for supervisors to facilitate occupation-based practice during fieldwork education are interconnected and as such cannot be used in isolation from each other. The significance of the study was centred on supervision's contribution to students understanding of occupation-based

community practice through the use of teaching and learning strategies and methods in fieldwork education and through the facilitation of occupation-based community practice in OT curricula in teaching and practice. In order to illustrate how the guidelines link to the significance of this study, a three-tier system will be used.

A three-tier system is a design that consists of three well-defined and separate processes that each run on a different platform. The topmost level is called the presentation tier. In relation to this study the presentation tier is associated with the students understanding of occupation-based community practice. In this tier students will be able to demonstrate, apply and critique their understanding of occupation-based community practice. The middle tier is called the application tier which, for the purposes of this study, is related to teaching and learning strategies and methods in fieldwork education. As its name suggests the application tier is concerned with the supervisors' application of teaching and learning strategies and methods in the facilitation of students learning of occupation-based community practice. The bottom tier called the data tier which is associated with the facilitation of occupation-based community practice in undergraduate OT curricula in teaching and in practice. This tier consists of all the data related to occupation-based community practice which can be used within the teaching and practice aspects of occupation-based community practice (See Figure 6).

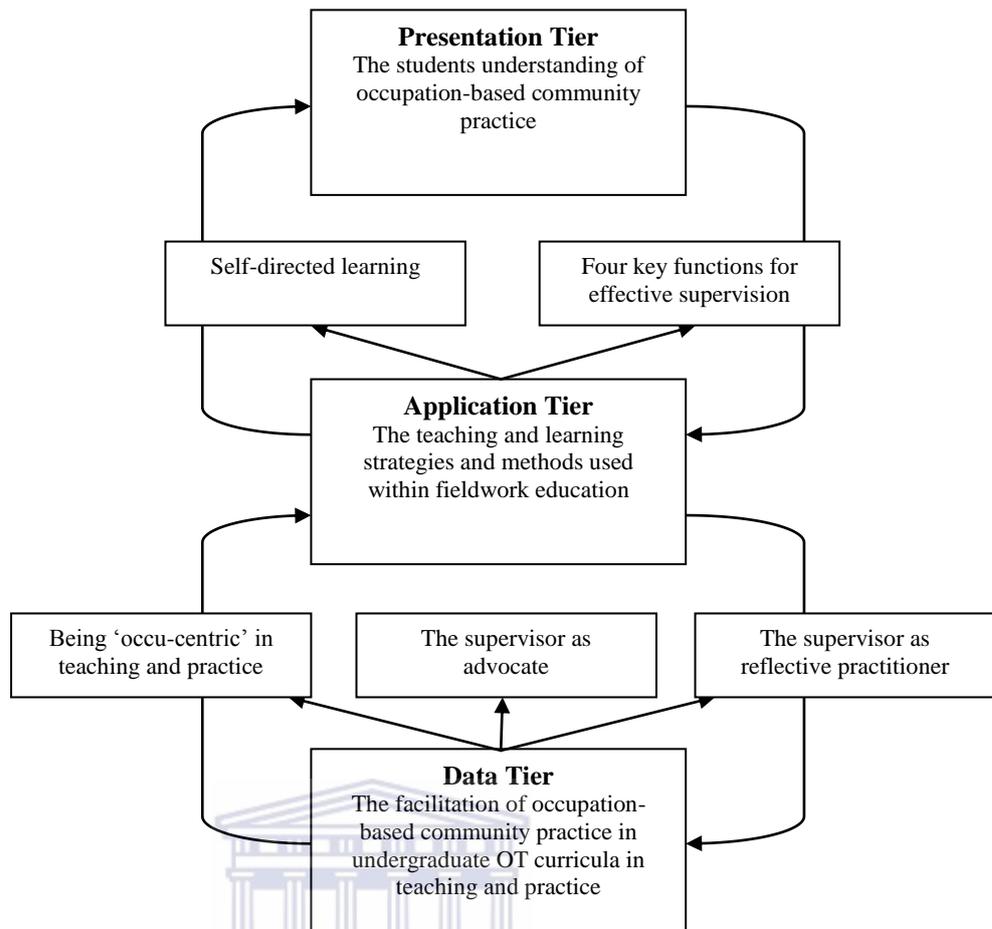


Figure 6: The Three-tier System for the Facilitation of Occupation-Based Community Practice

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As the presentation tier is the outcome of what should be achieved with regards to occupation-based community practice, it can therefore be assumed that the application tier and the data tier support the three-tier system. As such the guidelines for the inclusion of occupation in community fieldwork education and for supervisors to facilitate occupation-based practice during fieldwork education can support both the application tier and the data tier (See Figure 6). The strategies presented within self-directed learning and the four key functions for effective supervision support the teaching and learning strategies and methods used within fieldwork education (application tier) while the strategies presented

within being ‘occu-centric’ in teaching and practice, the supervisor as advocate, and the supervisor as reflective practitioner support the facilitation of occupation-based community practice in undergraduate OT curricula in teaching and practice (data tier).

A fundamental aspect of a three-tier system is that the presentation tier should never communicate directly with the data tier. In a three-tier model all communication must pass through the application tier. In other words in order for students to be able to demonstrate, apply and critique their understanding of occupation-based community practice (presentation tier), they should have been facilitated to develop this understanding through the use of teaching and learning strategies within fieldwork education (application tier) by retrieving and using information that they have gained through the facilitation of occupation-based community practice in undergraduate OT curricula (data tier). A final feature of the three-tier system is that even though each tier needs to interact with the other in order to be successful, the three-tier system is designed to allow any of the three tiers to be upgraded or transformed independently as the requirements or expectations change (See Figure 6). As such an evaluation of each level is required continuously in order to use the three-tier system to successfully facilitate occupation-based community practice.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are made in terms of:

6.2.1 Community Development and Community Focused OT

6.2.1.1 It is recommended that partnerships be established between undergraduate OT programmes and communities so that a foundation of trust and understanding can be formed. Discussions need to be held which will bring to light the expectations of the undergraduate OT programme and the goals and aspirations of the community. Those supervising in these communities need to spend time in the community in order to develop a true understanding of the community so that they are able to mediate between the students and the community and more importantly act as advocator for the community.

6.2.1.2 It is recommended that community entry be emphasised as an integral aspect of community development in undergraduate teaching through exposing students to fieldwork visits within communities. The established partnerships between the undergraduate OT programme and the community can identify areas in the community such as crèche's, schools, home based care organisations,

community non-governmental organisations and farms that will allow students the opportunity to engage and interact with community members in the routine aspects of their daily lives. This will allow students to develop an understanding of the community from the community members' perspective and to merge the theoretical aspects of community entry with their own experiences.

6.2.1.3 It is recommended that when placing students in fieldwork settings, priority is given to the opportunity for students to be exposed to role-emerging placements and to live in the community they work in. Because this is not often logistically or financially possible, it is further recommended that undergraduate OT programs try and secure a commitment from their faculty with regards to community based learning for the provision of resources in order to meet the call from the WFOT minimum standards (Hocking & Ness, 2002) and the adoption of the primary healthcare philosophy (WHO, 1978) by the National Department of Health in South Africa.

6.2.2 'Occu-centric' Teaching and Learning

6.2.2.1 It is recommended that undergraduate OT programmes centralise occupation in all components of their teaching and learning. All modules that form part of the

undergraduate OT programme should be named and linked to the concept of occupation e.g. occupational development and performance. All aspects of learning within these modules should be associated with the concept of occupation e.g. neurological impact on occupational performance. All lecturers and supervisors should teach and supervise from an occupational perspective e.g. using the word occupation as opposed to activity.

6.2.2.2 It is recommended that undergraduate OT programs influence all students' ability to understand themselves as occupational beings. Students in their first year of study should be exposed to and understand occupation from a subjective point of view and as such from a personal perspective. In order to achieve this first year modules should incorporate components in which students can study themselves as occupational beings with the express purpose of understanding their own capacities and strengths. This should be aimed at developing the students' occupational potential and assisting them to identify and develop their limitations.

6.2.3 Reflective Practice

6.2.3.1 It is recommended that undergraduate OT programs develop students' ability to engage in reflective practice

and academic reading as part of the teaching and learning activities within OT modules from first year. This can be achieved by providing the students with guidelines for reflective practice as well as incorporating the inclusion of academic reading into students reflections. These aspects should be assessed within teaching modules and fieldwork modules and feedback should be provided to students as a guideline of their performance.

6.2.3.2 It is further recommended that supervisors engage in reflective practice and academic reading during their supervision of students in fieldwork settings. The provision of academic literature to students and therefore the need of the supervisor to engage in academic reading should be included in the expectations of supervisors within undergraduate OT programmes. Engaging in reflective practice should be mandatory for supervisors during fieldwork supervision based not only on the content of their supervision but also on their methods in order to evaluate these aspects of their supervision.

6.2.4 Supervision Styles and Methods

6.2.4.1 It is recommended that supervisors are knowledgeable about the various supervision approaches, styles and techniques available in order to facilitate positive and

effective learning experiences for students. This can be achieved through the provision of workshops for fieldwork supervisors by undergraduate OT programmes. In addition fieldwork supervisors in undergraduate OT programmes can also establish work groups where they can share their experiences of and new developments within teaching and learning approaches used in fieldwork education.

6.2.5 Research

6.2.5.1 Due to the emerging nature of the field of community development in OT it is recommended that research in collaboration with and from the perspective of OT students or OT professionals working in community settings be undertaken to further explore the development of models of community development from an OT perspective in order to further enhance and strengthen the role of the OT in community development.

6.2.5.2 From an educational perspective, research in collaboration with communities might assist in producing or enhancing processes that can be included in the community component of an undergraduate OT program. Research of this nature can focus on supervisors as advocates in communities and the process of increasing the community's capacity for change. The results of research can contribute

to policy and practice transformations for both communities and undergraduate OT programmes.

6.2.5.3 It is further recommended that this research study be further explored within other educational settings and with various role-emerging placements in order to further consolidate how supervision can contribute to the professional development of students in non-traditional fieldwork placements.

6.3 Conclusion



This study started as a personal journey that I undertook to gain insight into my personal contribution to the 2009 final year OT students learning in a community setting. I was interested in exploring the students' experiences of their supervision as well as the perceptions that they had regarding the role that supervision played in their learning about occupation-based community practice. The study showed how my style and methods of supervision contributed to their understanding of occupation-based community practice, and as per the rationale, provide guidelines for the supervision of students in community settings. The generated understanding of the 2009 final year OT students fieldwork experiences and the factors that facilitated their learning and professional development can be used to assist in the preparation of future OT's as well as support those currently supervising in the field of occupation-based community practice. Finally, this

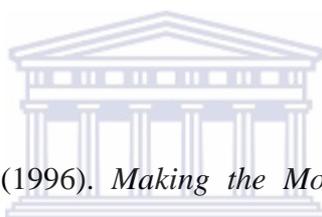
study can inform the facilitation of occupation-based practice through OT curricula and at the same time guide the implementation of specific teaching and learning strategies and methods to facilitate the professional development of OT students during fieldwork education.



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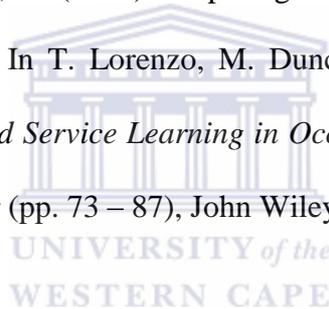
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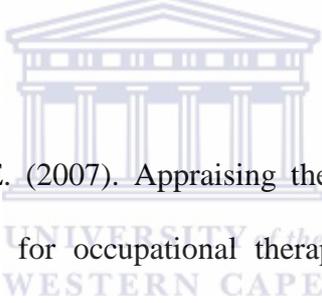
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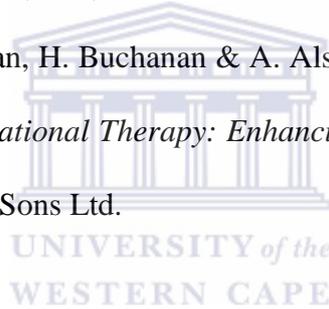
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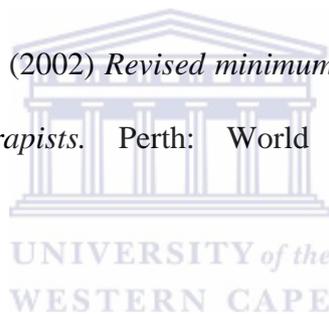
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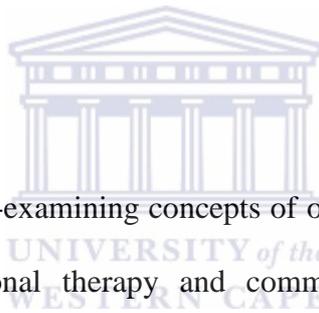
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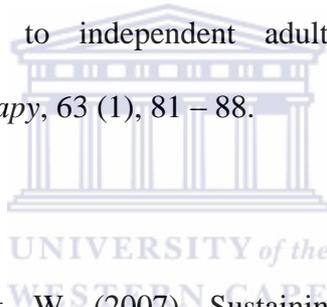
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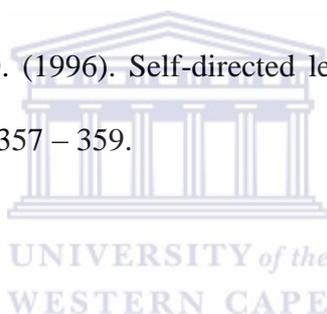
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - UWC Community Process

SUPPORTIVE DOCUMENT – UWC COMMUNITY PROCESS

1. COMMUNITY ENTRY SKILLS

The first step in the process is the application of community entry skills. The students state exactly which community entry skills will be used and what its relevance to the specific community is. This is followed by a description of how these skills will be put into practice. Students have to apply community entry skills throughout the practice learning time.

The students provide an introduction to the practice learning site which provides a description of the context of the site. Community entry skills utilize the principles of LOOK, LISTEN and LEARN. The LOOK principle requires the use of observation skills within the community, its settings, infrastructure, resources, dynamics, and community interaction. The LISTEN principle requires the ability to interact with the community members i.e. the learners themselves, and not only the key role players i.e. the teachers and parents. The LEARN principle requires an interpretation of the LOOK and LISTEN principles.

2. ASSESSMENT

The second step in the process is assessment, which includes the community profile, needs assessment, needs analysis and selection of frame of reference to guide intervention.

2.1 COMMUNITY PROFILE

This is a description of aspects observed (LOOK) during the community entry phase.

2.1.1 INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure is defined as the non-movable structures within the community. This is a pre-requisite to entering into the community. These include the following:

- Geographic location and site
- Distance from city

2.1.2 POPULATION

This is followed by a general description of the population that can be obtained using stats and includes the following:

- Total population
- Ratios
- Age distribution
- Birth & death rates



2.1.3 DYNAMICS

This is the effects of the infrastructure and population on the community. Links are drawn between the infrastructure and population and the effects it may have on the community.

2.2 NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The needs assessment is completed by doing a rapid participatory appraisal on the community. This is a qualitative technique for community assessment which originated in developing countries to gain insight into a community's own perspective of its needs. (Murray and Graham, 1995). A profile is built from information collected on nine aspects of the community. These are brought together to form the information pyramid (WHO, 1998) shown in the figure. The first layer defines the composition of the community, how it is organized and its capacity to act. The second layer covers the social ecological factors that influence

health. The third layer describes the existence and accessibility of current services. The final layer is concerned with national, regional and local policies. Key informants used by students include community members, community leaders and people who are centrally placed in the community because of their work or services they provide. It is a lengthy process and data collection methods include in depth interviews and focus groups as well as informal discussions with community members.

2.2.1 COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY COMPOSITION

- Levels of service provision

These are the levels of service provision in the community. Primary, secondary or tertiary level services e.g. health, social, police, recreation etc. is listed.

- Education

These are the types of education services available in the community. The different levels of education as well as their availability are stated. Describe what you have looked, listened and learnt within the schools.

- Employment

This is where statistics and observations are useful. The general employment level of the community is identified.

COMMUNITY ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE

This indicates the hierarchical structure and organisation of the community. This would include information such as the flow of hierarchy in the community concerning key people such as the mayor as well as organisations such as the municipality.

COMMUNITY CAPACITY

- Awareness and Capacity

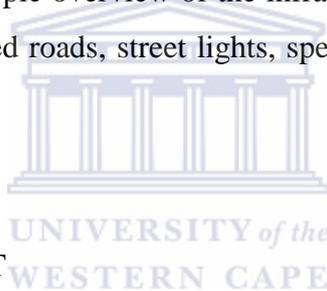
This identifies the communities' level of awareness with regard to the issues and needs that directly affect the community. The communities' capacity is however described as their ability to take action in addressing those circumstances by setting needed structures in place.

- Support Systems

This describes the systems or structures in and surrounding the community that render a service to or support the specific community.

- Infrastructure

This provides a microscopic overview of the infrastructure of the community e.g. presence of gravel / tarred roads, street lights, speed bumps, litter bins, soil type, pollution, etc.



2.2.2 ENVIRONMENT

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- Housing and Sanitation

Here using observation skills are important. The type of housing, the conditions of the houses, and the enclosed area around the houses as well as the living conditions within the houses is described. Sanitation with regard to housing is discussed and sanitation services provided by the municipality e.g. refuse removal and sewerage etc. is taken into consideration.

- Water and Pollution

This describes the water supply and pollution levels of the community.

- Transport and Accessibility

The various means of transport within and around the community is discussed including availability, cost, safety and ease of access to other communities. Accessibility provides a description or analysis of the accessibility of services and structures to disabled people.

SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

- Crime and Gender Violence

Here statistics and observations are useful. The levels and predominant types of crime in the community as well as the risk of gender violence is identified.

- Drug abuse and Alcoholism

Again statistics and observations are useful. The levels of substance abuse and distribution within the community are identified.

- Poverty and Mortality

Use statistics and observations to state the poverty levels and predominant socioeconomic class of the community as well as the expected mortality rates.

DISEASE AND DISABILITY PROFILE

- Type of disease / disability

The most predominant types of disease and / or disability as observed, identified by community and census statistics are reported.

- Health indicators

This is obtained from community reports i.e. routine monthly reports from clinics, community health centres etc.

- Link with socioeconomic condition

From the established list of predominant types of disease / disability, links with the socioeconomic conditions identified are made and discussed.

2.2.3 SERVICES

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

- Primary, Secondary and Tertiary

This is where a comprehensive list and short description of all the primary, secondary and tertiary services available in the community is made. For follow up and future planning purposes students are expected to include a contact person with contact details.

- Community Based Organisations

All the community based organisations available in the community including a short description; contact person and details are listed.

- Health Centres

All the health centres available in the community including a short description, contact person and details are listed.

- Referral Systems

This identifies referral structures available to the community, as well as the referral procedure.

SOCIAL SERVICES

- Non-Governmental Organisations

All the non-governmental organisations available in the community including a short description, contact person and details are listed.

- Government Sectors

All the government sectors within the community including a short description, contact person and details are listed.

- Local Government Sectors

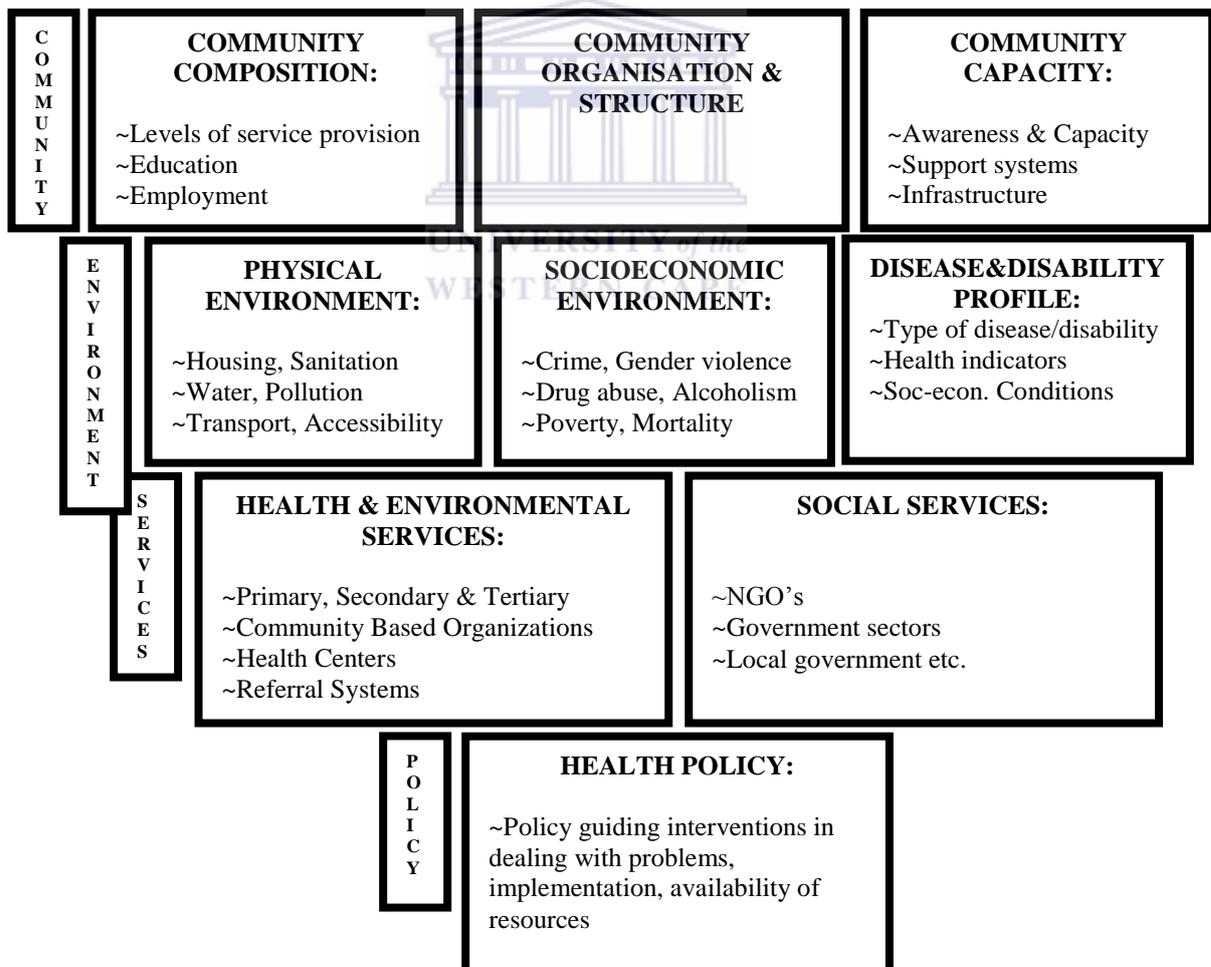
All the local government sectors within the community including a short description, contact person and details are listed.

2.2.4 POLICY

HEALTH POLICY

- This refers to policy guiding interventions in dealing with health problems, intervention and availability of resources. From all the information gathered within the pyramid, identify the relevant policies affecting those aspects.

INFORMATION PYRAMID



2.3 NEEDS ANALYSIS

After the information pyramid is completed, students perform the needs analysis. This is a synthesis of the needs assessed. Students engage with information collected and undergo a critical reasoning process to identify the most prevalent needs in the community and the occupational therapy in addressing those needs. The student should see the emerging themes and how these link to one another through the information pyramid that was used. This can be by tabling the needs identified, the source of the information as well as the possible occupational therapy intervention. At the hand of selected OT frames of reference in combination with Health Promotion principles, students then select a community project for intervention.

2.4 MOTIVATION FOR PROJECT

Selection and motivation for a project is done to help students integrate their needs analysis, chosen frames of references and personal reasons with their choice of project. The motivation is given for a project that was identified as the most predominant need within the community taking resources, time and community participation into consideration.

3. INTERVENTION PLANNING

3.1 OUTCOME

These are broad aims stated in general terms that represent the general direction in which the students (and all involved) feel the project should be developing. It gives enough focus for providing direction for the planning of the project. Depending on the focus of the project it could involve one or all of the health promotion action areas. In terms of occupation it could address occupational performance context or areas, but in a general way. This can be described as the “vision” for the project, i.e. what the project would have achieved by the end of a given time. Link your outcome with the frames of reference you have selected.

3.2 OUTCOME INDICATORS

Indicators in general are points that are used by students to grade or measure the success of the project over time and to keep them on track. Outcome indicators are linked to the outcome and process indicators are linked to the objectives. Sometimes it is difficult to tell the difference between outcome and process indicators. Outcome indicators will tell students when ALL the objectives have met as a whole. These indicators are measurable points that could be weighed up against the outcome to show whether it has been achieved or not. It is sometimes best to use numbers or percentages as an indicator.

3.3 OBJECTIVES

Objectives are set for specific interventions as steps towards achieving the outcome. Link your objectives with the frames of reference you have selected.

3.4 PROCESS INDICATORS

These tell students how each step of the project is going, and enables them to monitor progress. They are measurable and act as markers to show students that the project is going as planned.

4. INTERVENTION

This is the student's action plan for the project.

4.1 DIRECT INTERVENTION

These are activities that link directly with the project. It is the step-by-step plan of the intervention. It is written in detail and reflects the students reasoning regarding WHAT will be done, WHEN it needs to be done, WHY it needs to be done, HOW it will be done, WHERE it will be done and by WHOM.

4.2 INDIRECT INTERVENTION

These are the activities students do that do not link directly with the project e.g. interviews, phone calls, research. This is recorded daily in a table format or in log book.

4.3 ANALYSIS OF INTERVENTION

This is where students reflect back on everything that they had planned to do and weigh it up against everything that actually happened. They consider what has worked, what has not worked and why?

4.4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Here students look back to the indicators and summarize exactly what has happened. They draw conclusions and link it with theory as this will feed into their future planning.

5. FUTURE PLANNING

This is also done in table format. It has to be realistic in terms of the community dynamics as well as available resources. It outlines the role of community members, health workers, students etc. in sustaining the project. It follows the analysis and is based on students' recommendations for sustaining the project. This forms the basis a final report which is compiled relevant role players when students leave the practice learning site.

Notes compiled from:

Coulson, Goldstein & Ntuli (1998). Health Promotion Manual for South Africa. Heinemann

WHO (1994), Health for all by the year 2000. Technical Paper

Ingrid Magner (2001) UWC OT Department

Gerard Filies (2001/2) UWC OT Department

Nikki Vermeulen (2005) UWC OT Department

Farhana Firfirey (2005) UWC OT Department

Appendix 2 – Participant Information Letter

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FACULTY OF COMMUNITY & HEALTH SCIENCES

INFORMATION SHEET

Project Title: 4th year Occupational Therapy students' experience of supervision during community practice fieldwork.

What is this study about?

Following recent developments around occupation in the OT profession, as well as the call to centralize occupation in all components of OT educational programs, I included content on occupation within my supervision of 4th year OT students in community settings. This resulted in the students' developing new understandings in occupation based community practice. The American Association of Occupational Therapy (2007) emphasises that OT educators advocate the use of occupation to facilitate health promoting growth and change with the goal of facilitating peoples' participation in meaningful occupations. Therefore, this study will focus on the students' experience of the supervision they received while following the steps of the Community Process as well as their perceptions of the relationship between their supervision and their learning about occupation based community practice.

What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?

The envisaged time period for this research study would be four - five months. The researcher will invite the six participants to participate in the study. Each participant will be asked to give consent to use their community fieldwork journals and their portfolio files. The data collected from their journals and portfolio files will be used to gain insights into the students' experiences and perceptions of the supervision they received in community fieldwork and in their learning about occupation based community practice.

Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?

We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. To help protect your confidentiality each participant's information will be labeled by a research identity code only. Through the use of this research identity code, the researcher will be able to link your journals and portfolio file to your identity. If I write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible.

What are the risks of this research?

There are no known risks associated with participating in this research project.

What are the benefits of this research?

This research study is not designed to help you personally, but the process and results may help you and the researcher learn more about generating an understanding of how supervision contributes towards students' understanding of occupation based community practice. The findings of this study will furthermore enhance the OT profession's understanding, knowledge and insight into the facilitation of occupation based community practice within OT curricula.

Do I have to be in this research and may I stop participating at any time?

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.

Is any assistance available if I am negatively affected by participating in this study?

There are no known risks associated with participating in this research project. If there is however any issues or topics that the participant would like to discuss further, he/she may contact the researcher. Another option could be to utilize the services of the UWC Institute for student counselling.

What if I have questions?

This research is being conducted by Nicola Vermeulen registered under the Department of Occupational Therapy at the University of the Western Cape. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact me. My contact details are as follows:

Researcher: Ms. Nicola Vermeulen

Work Address: University of the Western Cape
Faculty of Community and Health Sciences
Department of Occupational Therapy
Private Bag X17
Bellville
7535

Email: nvermeulen@uwc.ac.za

Tel: 021 959 2965 (w)

Should you have any questions regarding this study and your rights as a research participant or if you wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact:

Supervisor: Dr. Jo-Celene' de Jongh
University of the Western Cape
Faculty of Community and Health Sciences
Department of Occupational Therapy
Private Bag X 17
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Tel: 021 959 3151 (w)

This research has been approved by the University of the Western Cape's Senate Research Committee and Ethics Committee.

Appendix 3 – Participant Written Consent Form

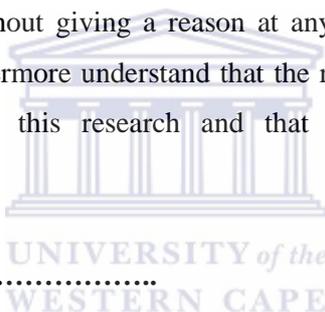
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DEPARTMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project: 4th year Occupational Therapy students' experience of supervision during community practice fieldwork.

The study has been described to me by means of the Information Sheet, in language that I understand and I freely and voluntarily agree to participate. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed and that I may withdraw from the study without giving a reason at any time and this will not negatively affect me in any way. I furthermore understand that the researcher will access my academic results for the purposes of this research and that all information will be handled confidentially.



Participant's name.....
Participant's signature.....

Witness.....

Date.....

Should you have any questions regarding this study or wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact the study coordinator:

Study Coordinator's Name:

Nicola Vermeulen

Tel: 021 959 2965 (w)

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