CHALLENGES

OF INTEGRATING THEORY AND PRACTICE

IN SOCIAL WORK TEACHING AND LEARNING

SHERNAAZ CARELSE

STUDENT NUMBER 9176993

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Social Work (MSW) in the Social Work Department, Community and Health Sciences Faculty, University of the Western Cape

Supervisor: Prof SS Terblanche

June 2010

ABSTRACT

Global and national standards for social work training have for a very long time required that institutions of higher learning include a theoretical as well as a practical component into the social work programme. The integration of theory and practice is purposefully aimed at enhancing the student's competency and skills (SAQA, 2003:9). The introduction of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) in South Africa (Government Gazette No. 19640, 1998) has confirmed the need for addressing challenges relating to integration of theory and practice.

Assessments of social work fieldwork competence at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) indicate that the majority of the students in the third year of study struggle to integrate theory and practice resulting in low level competence in Intermediate Fieldwork Education (University of the Western Cape Quality assurance report: Intermediate Fieldwork, 2007). In addition to the aforementioned, student reports indicate that there is a perception that the classroom learning, the supervision and fieldwork practice often are not sufficient to facilitate the integration of theory and practice. The lack of integration of theory and practice results in students not achieving the expected learning outcomes. This is an urgent concern in social work education and it seems most appropriate to learn from the people who are closely affected by and involved in this issue.

The focus of the study was thus on the challenges experienced by social work students, their lecturers and fieldwork supervisors at UWC regarding the integration of theory and practice at intermediate level in the context of OBE. Hence I used a qualitative approach as I wanted to study the challenges of theory and practice integration from an insiders' perspective. This is appropriate when the goal of research is to describe and understand a social issue. For this reason I selected an exploratory-descriptive research design and an instrumental research strategy to study the issue of theory and practice integration in the selected programme. The population of the study was third year social work students at UWC and also a selected group of third year social work students from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU), social work lecturers from UWC and field

supervisors form agencies in the Western Cape where social work students are placed. Purposive sampling were utilized to select sixteen third year social work students from UWC, seven NMMU students, sixteen field supervisors and eight lecturers from UWC.

Data were collected by means of individual interviews as well as focus group sessions from students and field supervisors and by means of written responses to an open –ended guide from lecturers. Data were analyzed by means of thematic, content analysis. Relevant literature findings on constructivism, cooperative learning and social work teaching and learning in particular were compared to the findings of the case study exploration. Literature pertaining to social work teaching and learning in the context of ELOs is limited and therefore further justifies the need for this research.

The findings indicated that participants in this study experienced challenges with regard to theory and practice integration on various levels and to different extents. They attribute these challenges to a variety of factors relating to the construction of knowledge in the classroom and in the fieldwork setting as well as personal challenges experienced by students. Hence I made various recommendations with regard to collaborative teaching and learning strategies within the classroom and fieldwork setting as well recommendations based on the conclusions of findings relating to students' personal challenges.

KEY CONCEPTS

Challenges

Collaborative teaching and learning strategies

Constructivism

Cooperative learning

Exit Level Outcomes

Outcomes-Based Education

Theory and practice integration

DECLARATION

Student number: 9176993

I declare that **Challenges of integrating theory and practice in social work teaching and learning,** is my own work and that I have acknowledged and referenced all sources of information that I have quoted.

Signature

1 September 2010

Date:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank my heavenly Father for giving me the strength and grace to have undertaken this project. He is the source of my strength and my peace when at times this task seemed insurmountable.

Prof. Terblanche, thank you for believing in my potential and for providing me with intellectual input over the past three years. Your constant affirmation and support made the journey so much more rewarding.

I am grateful to all the respondents who participated and made this research a reality.

I have much gratitude and appreciation for all my colleagues in the social work department for your support and encouragement. In particular I want to thank Glynis Dykes for all the hard work especially during the proposal writing stages and for all your editing skills; Dr. Anna-Marie Beytell for providing me with much valuable literature sources; Marie Minnaar-Macdonald for challenging my thoughts and assortment of literature sources and Prof. Kathy Collins for editing my work.

Thank you to all family, friends and colleagues for your prayers and support. A special word of thanks to Moses, Michelle, Deborah, Devene, Helen and Dominic for your generosity and kindness.

To my parents, Fazlyn and Kashiefa for taking care of my household while I was doing this project. I appreciate you and am grateful for your unselfish sacrifice.

To my darling children, Emily and Daniel, this project is dedicated to you.

Lastly, to Dederick, I could not have done this without your love, patience, support and sacrifices.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Global and national standards for social work training have for a very long time required that institutions for higher learning include a theoretical as well as a practical component into the social work program. The integration of theory and practice is purposefully aimed at enhancing the student's competency and skills (SAQA, 2003:9). The introduction of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) in South Africa has confirmed the need for addressing challenges relating to integration of theory and practice.

After 1994 when apartheid laws that segregated social welfare along racial lines were abolished, there was general acknowledgement that South African universities were to review and restructure their instructional programmes to provide equal access and equally fair chances of success to all students as prescribed by the White Paper on Higher Education (Boughey, 2004:6). The Policy Framework for Education and Training (Department of Education, 2004) indicated three main objectives for Education and Training sectors in South Africa. Firstly, access to life long education and training for all; secondly, liberty, equality and justice to ensure freedom of choice within the context of equal opportunity, to remedy the imbalances of apartheid and thirdly, to undertake national reconstruction and development to ensure empowerment at all levels in society (Maree & Fraser, 2004:3).

OBE was introduced in 1994 and was intended to be a model that would meet the educational needs of students regardless of their location, ethnic affiliation, economic status or abilities. OBE, in the South African context, was therefore

implemented as a model of teaching and learning to alleviate the education crisis left by the remnants of apartheid (Fakier & Waghid, 2004:54-55).

South Africa is the only African country that has a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) that governs standards for education and training. The four year social work degree programme which is registered according to the requirements of NQF is called the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW). Institutions of higher learning thus developed new social work curricula that complied with the regulations of the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA), and the NQF (Sewpaul & Lombard, 2004).

Social work students from their second year of study register with the South African Council for Social Services Professions (SACSSP) and again after they have qualify as practitioners (SACSSP, 2003]. Social workers and students are governed by the code of conduct of SACSSP and failure to do so may result in disciplinary action against such individuals (SACSSP, 2003). Hence, even though different universities have different curricula for education and training of social workers, they all subscribe to the code of ethics of the SACSSP. The code also stipulates that educators, trainers and assessors at such departments or schools must be qualified and registered social workers according to the SAQA requirements (SAQA, 2001).

In addition to the prescribed policy guidelines pertaining to conduct and ethics, the SACSSP also prescribes Exit Level Outcomes (ELOs) which are registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). In South Africa, all social work training programmes offered at universities are registered according to the council's prescribed ELOs and each module has specified learning outcomes against which students are assessed. Tertiary institutions had to implement the ELOs specified for the new BSW degree in January 2007 (Bozalek, 2009).

According to the South African Government Gazette No. 23406 (Department of Education, 2002:23), a learning outcome is a description of what knowledge,

skills and values learners should demonstrate and be able to do at the end of the General Education and Training band. A set of learning outcomes should ensure integration of theory and practice and progression in the development of concepts, skills, and values by the assessment standards. This approach to education entails a paradigm shift in that it focuses on 'accomplishing results' rather than merely 'providing a service' (Spady, 1994a:8).

Two significant underlying principles of OBE within context of this study are that learners should be granted opportunities to learn to their full potential and the learning environment should be conducive for learners to succeed (Department of Education, 1995). Hence, for outcomes to be achieved the learning environment must be conducive for learners to succeed and sufficient opportunity for achievement of outcomes must be afforded. Furthermore, the education process must be facilitated in a way that would enable students to demonstrate their competencies through different learning opportunities (SAQA, 2003:9). In social work, these opportunities are facilitated by way of fieldwork placements at social service agencies and laboratory sessions on campus (University of the Western Cape Intermediate Fieldwork Education Guide, 2008).

Evidence of achievement of outcomes should be collected by means of a variety of methods of assessment, both in fieldwork and classroom learning. Assessment strategies for theory and practice that are used throughout the social work training programme include written assignments, tests, written and oral examinations, fieldwork reports, collaborative evaluations, observation of fieldwork practice, and a portfolio of evidence (SAQA, 2003:8).

1.2 PROBLEM DEFINITION AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Ramsden (2003) indicates that student learning is linked to the student's individual potential and the particular way that the student learns. According to Dettlaff & Wallace (2002), the bottom line is that the lack of integration of theory and practice results in students not achieving the expected learning outcomes. In a study conducted in the social work department at the University of the Western

Cape (UWC), Bozalek (2009) argues that learning outcomes are pre-determined and standardised and therefore learner-driven knowledge and learners input into curriculum development is unlikely. Learners have to adhere to the outcomes prescribed and to timeframes predetermined by the university calendar. Secondly, the general concept of ELOs assumes that a specified outcome is appropriate for any context. Outcome relates to how quality is defined and by whom, including how assessment standards are developed and Bozalek asserts that wide stakeholder consultation and input into developing standards is important in the process of establishing appropriate standards for ELOs (Bozalek, 2009).

Assessments of social work fieldwork competence at UWC indicate that the majority of the students in the third year of study struggle to integrate theory and practice resulting in low level competence in Intermediate Fieldwork Education (University of the Western Cape, 2007). In addition to the aforementioned, student evaluations indicate that there is a perception that classroom learning, supervision and fieldwork practice often are not sufficient to facilitate the integration of theory and practice. The lack of integration of theory and practice results in students not achieving the ELOs which are the outcomes assessable at the end of a qualification. Therefore I concur with Dettlaff & Wallace (2002) that the integration of theory and practice in fieldwork education is an urgent concern and necessary for effective social work education.

If the integration of theory and practice in Fieldwork Education is an urgent concern it seems most appropriate to learn from the people who are closely affected by and involved in this issue about challenges experienced to accomplish this integration. The focus of the study was thus on the challenges experienced by third year social work students at UWC with regard to the integration of theory and practice in the context of OBE.

From the literature reviewed it is evident that there is a lack of research about the integration of theory and practice in social work education in the context of ELOs prescribed by the SACSSP. Therefore I whish to contribute to a body of

knowledge by exploring the challenges experienced by students, lecturers and field supervisors relating to the integration of theory and practice in Social Work teaching and learning. The following goal and objectives were formulated to structure the research process.

1.3 GOAL OF THE STUDY

The goal of the study was to explore and describe the challenges experienced by third year social work students in the Social Work Department at UWC, as well as the experiences of their lecturers and field supervisors with regard to the facilitation of teaching and learning that promote or hinder theory and practice integration. The goal was adapted during the course of the study to include the experiences of students at a different university with a similar teaching and learning experiences (in social work) but a different supervision structure to those of UWC students. Hence I conducted a focus group session with seven third year social work students at NMMU and the data were used in a comparison between the two groups.

1.3.1 Research question

What are the challenges experienced by third year students, lecturers and field supervisors with regard to the integration of theory and practice in Social Work teaching and learning?

1.3.2 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were to:

1.3.2.1 explore and describe the challenges experienced by lecturers with regard to teaching strategies and techniques to facilitate the integration of theory and practice;

1.3.2.2 explore and describe the challenges experienced by fieldwork supervisors in terms of the methods used for supervision to facilitate theory and practice integration in fieldwork education;

1.3.2.3 explore and describe the challenges experienced by students relating to the integration of theory and practice in fieldwork education and

1.3.2.4 explore and describe the personal obstacles and challenges experienced by students that impact on integration of theory and practice.

1.4 INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

Chapter Three provides a detailed account of the research methodology and design; however in this introduction I choose to brief the reader on the research methodology as a means of orientation to the study.

1.4.1 Research approach

The qualitative research approach was selected based on the fact that it is a "process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explores a social or human problem." (Creswell, 1998:15). The reason for choosing this approach is due to the nature of the research question which is exploratory. Furthermore, variables need to be identified and theories need to be developed and explained (Creswell, 1998:17-18) in terms of the challenges that result in the lack of theory and practice integration and the achievement of ELOs.

1.4. 2 Research design

An exploratory-descriptive design (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:79-80) was used as this is the most appropriate means to satisfy my concern for better understanding

the challenges experienced by students, the perception of their lecturers and field supervisors with regard to theory and practice integration.

It may contribute to the identification of the feasibility for more comprehensive studies, for example interventions relating to theory and practice integration and hence determine priorities for future studies in this regard. Furthermore this approach is a viable option to develop new hypotheses about the existing problem of theory and practice integration in the context of OBE; which is discussed in this study.

1.4.3 Research strategy

I have opted to conduct a case study which according to Creswell (1998:36 & 61) is used to study a situation over a specific period of time ("bounded by time"), within in a particular setting, using in-depth data collection which includes many different sources of information that are "rich in context". A case can be a progamme or several programmes, an event, an activity or individual(s) bounded by time and place. The case in this study is the Intermediate Fieldwork module, signifying a (teaching) programme.

1.4.4 Research setting and population

The study was conducted in the Social Work Department at the University of the Western Cape. The population was all third year social work students at UWC, eight lecturers, who are teaching undergraduate social work modules in the Department of Social Work at the UWC and thirty two field supervisors at various None Government Organisations (NGOs) and Social Development offices where third year students are placed for Intermediate Fieldwork Education. Also included was a sample of seven out of the population of twenty eight students at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) who volunteered to participate in a focus group session. The rationale for including the NMMU students was to explore the experiences of students at a different university with a

similar background but with a different supervision structure to those of UWC students.

1.4.5 Sampling for qualitative case study

I used purposive sampling and tried to recruit all eight lecturers in the Social Work Department at UWC teaching at undergraduate level via e-mail because they have contributed to student learning up to third year level. Only four lecturers volunteered to participate. A purposeful sample (Creswell, 1998:62) was drawn from the thirty two field supervisors of third year students. The criteria for selection were those agency supervisors who have offered placement to UWC students from 2005 to 2008, who have terminated placements due to poor performance by students and those who have indicated concern about the lack of knowledge, skills and values from third year students. Those who fit one or more of the three criteria were recruited telephonically. I recruited thirteen field supervisors for group and individual interviews.

I made use of purposive sampling for selecting students to participate because I wanted to include students who were challenged with regard to theory and practice integration. I recruited only students who scored below fifty-nine percent in any of the four social work theory modules and in the Intermediate Fieldwork module. Hence I recruited sixteen students from UWC who participated in the study. I also recruited seven students from Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University who participated in the study in comparison with the UWC students. The NMMU participants were recruited by the head of that department using the same purposive sampling criteria. Refer to Section 1.3 above.

1.4.6 Data collection

Guided by Creswell (1998:62) I used three methods of data collection namely; focus groups interviews, personal interviews and written narratives. Semi-structured schedules with open-ended questions guided all the methods of data

collection. Focus group sessions were conducted with students from UWC and NMMU. Personal interviews were conducted with some field supervisors while narratives were submitted by lecturers as well as some field supervisors.

1.4.7 Qualitative data analysis

Case study analysis involves "making a detailed description of the case and its setting" (Creswell, 2007:163). A description of the research setting is provided in Chapter Three, Sections 3. 5 and 3.6.

A thematic qualitative data analysis as proposed by Tesch in Creswell (1994:155) was used for analysis of all the data collected from the different sampling units. The specific aspect explored was the challenges experienced by the students, lecturers and field supervisors regarding theory and practice integration. In the process of analysis I read the transcripts and the typed responses by lecturers several times to get a sense of the content and themes. I made use of written notes in the margins to serve as memos (De Vos, 2005:337). I coded the content and selected themes that indicated emerging patterns. Categories and sub-categories of themes were developed. My supervisor checked my coding after I have completed this process and did not come up with any changes. This provided some verification of my own reliability as a coder (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:412 & 213). A detailed description of the data-analysis is provided in Chapter Three Section 3.10.

1.4.8 Qualitative data verification within the case study inquiry

According to Creswell (1998:201), qualitative data verification adds value to the research study and entails a variety of procedures of which I selected the following, discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

1.4.8.1 Critique checklist

I made use of a critique checklist which allowed for checks and balances (Creswell, 1998) by experienced researchers (colleagues in the social work department and my supervisor) as well as providing critical feedback.

1.4.8.2 Member checking

Member checking is when the researcher requests the participants to review the findings and interpretations made in the report (Creswell, 1998:203). After transcribing the interviews I asked the participants to examine drafts of the transcripts for feedback and accuracy. I also asked one student to scribe during one of the focus sessions for the same purpose.

1.4.8.3 Triangulation of information

Triangulation is the use of a variety of methods and means to elicit the type of information required (Creswell, 1998:213). I conducted interviews and focus groups to confirm themes and participant perspectives.

1.4.8.4 Reflexivity

Personal and intellectual biases must be acknowledged from the outset of the research process. The researcher's position in terms of age, gender, social and professional status, in relation to the data that is to be collected must be recognized and made explicit. These enhance credibility of the findings. (Mays & Pope, 2000:50). I was aware of my personal involvement in the subject matter as well as the distance between myself, the lecturers, field supervisors and the students who participated in the research and how these issues could possibly influence the findings. A more detailed description of reflexivity as a measure for trustworthiness is discussed in Chapter Three Section 3.11.4.

1.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The following ethical guidelines were adhered to in the study:

- Permission to conduct the study was granted by the Senate Higher Degrees Committee and Head of the Social Work Department at UWC.
- Participant information sheets (see Annexure A) and consent letters (see Annexure B) were disseminated to all participants explaining the ethical considerations and guidelines for participation in the study.
- Participation was voluntary and participants were guaranteed anonymity with regard to private and personal information in the reporting of the findings. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage of the process.

A more detailed discussion on the ethical considerations that were adhered to is found in Chapter Three Section 3.13.

1.6 DEFINITION OF CORE CONCEPTS

The following core concepts appear throughout the research report and therefore need to be clarified within the social work teaching and learning context:

Challenges: The term challenges is used as appose to problems or difficulties. This is a strengths-based approach which is a perspective in Social Work practice that is taught in the Social Work Department at UWC.

Collaborative teaching and learning strategies: These are strategies that are based on social constructivism and occur when students and academics work collectively as equal partners to create knowledge (Barkley, Cross & Major, 2005:6).

Constructionism: The term refers to the collective generation and transmission of meaning making. (Patton, 2002:97).

Constructivism: The term refers to an epistemological consideration focusing "exclusively on the meaning making activity of the individual's mind". It is the unique experience of a person and suggests that each individual's way of making sense of the world is as valid and worthy of respect as the next (Patton: 2002:96-97).

Cooperative learning: The term refers to a teaching and learning strategy that encourages students to work collaboratively in small learning groups in order to promote individual development. Understanding is developed when students are actively involved with others in the process of meaning making (Barkley, Cross & Major, 2005:5-6).

Exit Level Outcomes: These are the predetermined cumulative outcomes to be achieved at the end of the BSW qualification prescribed by the SACSSP and registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for the BSW degree (SAQA, 2003:3-4). See Annexure C.

Experiential learning: This is an approach that is centered on what the learner is able to do after a learning experience .i.e. making sense of the learning experience by applying it in the real world context (Amstutz, 1999:24).

Outcomes-Based Education: This refers to an education model that is focused on outcomes as opposed to content. It is a system that is based on the belief that individuals have the capability to learn and demonstrate their learning after carrying out an educational activity (Fakier & Waghid, 2004:64).

Theory and practice integration: This refers to the process in which constructing, acting out and evaluating knowledge are all equally interrelated into the process of learning (Dettlaff & Wallace, 2002:146).

1.7 CONTENT PLAN OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

This research report is divided into five chapters.

Chapter One provided a contextual framework for the study and a brief overview of the research methodology that is discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

Chapter Two provides a conceptual framework for the study. Although this is a qualitative study this overview was necessary to frame the integration of theory and practice within the related concepts, with the emphasis on teaching and learning in the context of OBE and a social constructivist approach to learning.

Chapter Three is a detailed discussion of the methodological approach, design and strategy used in this study.

Chapter Four is devoted to the discussion and presentation of the findings of the study and the relevant literature is compared to the themes and categories of findings that emerged from the study.

Chapter Five contains a summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

Lastly, the appendices include examples of the consent forms, participant information sheets, the exit level outcomes and illustrations of the interview schedules used for the three different groups of participants.

The chapter that follows presents the literature that was reviewed for this study.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND CORE CONCEPTS RELATED TO THE INTEGRATION OF THEORY AND PRACTICE IN THE CONTEXT OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

John Creswell (1998) claims that literature in a qualitative research study achieves more than one purpose. Firstly, it shares with the reader previous studies that are closely linked with the study conducted; and secondly, it relates to the study in terms of the ongoing discourse on the topic, as a means to fill the gaps and by so doing extends the previous studies. It also provides a framework for establishing the importance of the study and a benchmark for comparing the results of a study with other research findings. He also states that in qualitative research, literature should be used inductively as the study is exploratory. For this reason, the decision on whether the literature findings and theoretical perspectives should be presented before or after data collection depends on the strategy of enquiry (Creswell, 1998:20 - 21).

The case-study strategy was selected for this study and it was deemed relevant to provide a summarized theoretical perspective to frame the study in the beginning of the report. A literature comparison of the findings of the study is found in Chapter 4 where the findings are reported. This chapter is a summary of the theoretical perspectives that are structured around four themes that relate to how learners learn and to the integration of theory and practice.

The four themes are: objectives of student learning, OBE as context for integration of theory and practice, constructivist learning theory in the context of OBE, and social constructivist principles in social work supervision as a means to

facilitate integration of theory and practice. Hence what follows now is a discussion of the four themes.

2.2 OBJECTIVES OF STUDENT LEARNING

Teaching or transferring knowledge and developing understanding is a process of developing the learner's knowledge and skills (Caspi & Reid, 2002:3). This is echoed by Ramsden (2003) who asserts that teaching is the vehicle used to make it possible for students to learn. Hence teaching and learning requires objectives as Ramsden states "there is no such thing as learning in itself" (Ramsden, 2003:41). The objectives that educators set for students' learning are referred to by Benjamin Bloom (1956) as the Taxonomy of Educational Objectives.

There are three interrelated educational objectives; namely, to develop the learner's affective, psychomotor and cognitive abilities. The taxonomy of educational objectives is aimed at motivating teachers to use a holistic approach to facilitating learning. A holistic approach means that the three different domains are targeted for the learner's educational development (Krathwohl, 2002). The three domains are presented in figure 2.1 and briefly explained in subsequent paragraphs. (Adapted from Krathwohl (2002)

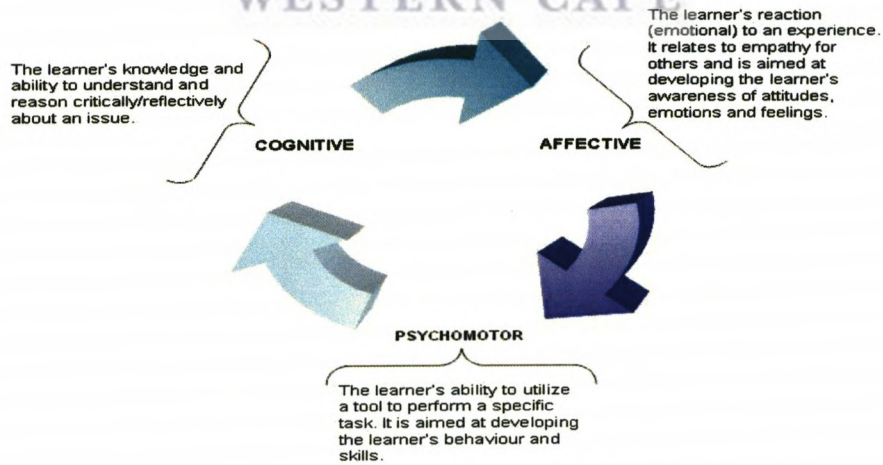


FIGURE: 2.1 BLOOM'S TAXONOMY OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES

2.2.1 Affective domain

Figure 2. 1 indicates that the affective domain relates to the learners' reaction or emotional response to an experience. It involves empathy for others and is aimed at developing the learner's awareness of attitudes, emotions and feelings. Bloom identified five levels in the affective domain as objectives of this domain. These operate from the lower level order processes to the higher level processes. The first lower level order or functioning is the receiving of information in which the learner passively pays attention. Secondly, the learner actively participates, reacts or responds to the learning process. This is followed by the third level which is valuing in which the learner attaches value to information, an object or phenomenon. The learner then organizes information, values and ideas and allows/accepts it into his/her own frame of reference and furthermore relates, compare and expands on what was learnt. The fifth and final level which is the highest level order in this taxonomy, is characterizing whereby the learner has a particular belief or value that influences his/her behaviour and results into a characteristic (Krathwohl, 2002).

Behaviourist theorists assert that learning happens when one's behaviour changes as a result of conditioning and that external factors such as the environment determines learning. This theory is focused on behaviour modification by use of stimulus-response pairs. It makes use of trial and error techniques for example tests and exams. Learning happens through association and reinforcement (getting a poor or a good grade). The learning is focused on control and adaptive response; of which the outcome is observable, meaning the learner can or cannot use the tool/skills (Conole, Dyke, Oliver & Seale 2004:17-33). Characteristics of behaviourist learning are that it is centered on the individual acquiring knowledge via a stimulus. Conole et al. (2004:25) cite Tennet (1992) who indicates that this approach to learning is non- reflective and is motivated by reinforcement, reflex and association.

2.2.2 Psychomotor domain

The second domain is the psychomotor domain which is the learner's ability to utilize a tool or instrument. It relates to the change in the learner's behaviour and skills. Objectives of the psychomotor domain include six movements the first of which is reflex movements which are actions that occur involuntarily in response to some stimulus. Secondly, basic fundamental movements which are innate movement patterns formed from a combination of reflex movements. Thirdly, perceptual abilities which are the translation of stimuli received through the senses into appropriate movements. The fourth objective in this domain is physical abilities which entail basic movements and abilities that are essential to the development of more highly skilled movements. Fifthly, are skilled movements which are more complex movements requiring a certain degree of efficiency and lastly, non-discursive movements which are the learner's ability to communicate through body movement (Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990).

2.2.3 Cognitive domain

The third and final domain is the cognitive domain and refers to the learner's ability to use theoretical knowledge, comprehend and critically think and respond to a particular object or phenomenon and having the skills to apply these in different contexts.

Cognitive theories attribute learning to how human memory works in promoting learning. Unlike the behaviourist view that learning is controlled by the environment; cognitivists argue that learning is controlled by the individual. Learning is viewed as the transformation in internal cognitive structures, of which the focus is human development. Learning takes place through processing and transmitting information. What this means is that the learner organizes and processes the information in his her memory therefore prior learning is important in this approach as it is this previous knowledge that is processed and organized. In essence cognitive theories are concerned with how memory promotes learning

(Conole et al. 2004:17 – 33). Slabbert (1999) refers to the terms meta-cognition to describe self-awareness (meta) of thinking (cognition) and thus learners' ability to reflect and organize information during the learning process. New knowledge is formed, acquired and executed when learners reflect and "deliberate concepts" (Slabbert, 1999:193).

Six levels or objectives are identified in this domain which are briefly discussed below as it relates directly to the issue of integration of theory and practice which is the focus of the study. Firstly, the learner has prior knowledge and demonstrates this by remembering facts and concepts of specific information, an object or phenomenon. The second objective is comprehension, in which the learner demonstrates the ability to translate, to interpret and to make conclusions about information, an object or phenomenon. The third level involves the application of knowledge in which the learner utilizes new knowledge and solves problems. This means that the learner applies new knowledge in different contexts. The fourth level is analysis which relates to the learner's ability to dissect information to determine cause and motives, make conclusion and find evidence to support findings or generalizations. The fifth level is synthesis in which the learner compiles information by organizing knowledge in new pattern and or proposes alternative patterns or solutions in other words creating new knowledge. The sixth and final level which is the highest order is evaluation where the learner demonstrates ability to present and defend new knowledge by making judgments about it, validating ideas or the quality of work based on predetermined criteria (Saroyan & Amundsen, 2004:61).

Critique of Bloom's objectives (1956) of the cognitive domain questions the hierarchical link between the categories. Below is a comparison of the original and revised taxonomy of the cognitive domain.

TABLE: 2. 1 COMPARISON OF THE ORIGINAL & REVISED TAXONOMY

ORIGINAL	REVISED
Knowledge	Remember: Recalling the information
Comprehension	Understand: Explain the ideas and/or concepts
Application	Apply: Using the newly acquired knowledge in another familiar situation
Analysis	Analyse: Comparing and differentiating between constituent parts.
Evaluation	Evaluate: Justifying a decision or course of action
Synthesis	Create: Generating new ways of creating products, ideas or ways of viewing things

Adapted by Pohl (1999)

Table 2. 1 compares the original and revised taxonomy which places synthesis (create) as the highest order and substantiates this revision by arguing that one should evaluate before creating new knowledge. Another distinguishing characteristic of the revised taxonomy is that nouns are replaced by verbs. This clarifies to educators and learners what learners should be able to do in order to achieve the learning objectives. Learning depends on whether the learner has achieved the criteria to advance to the next level in other words whether the learner has achieved the learning objectives.

According to Maree & Fraser (2004) OBE originated from the work of Benjamin Bloom (1956) and other social psychologists such as Ralph Tyler (1949) and John Carrol (1956). As with Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives an Outcomes-Based approach to education according to Spady (1994a:18) clarifies to teachers and learners what learners should be able to demonstrate after the learning process is completed. The curriculum, instruction and assessment are focused on the desired outcomes. In the South African context this approach

varies from the old Department of Education System (DET) in that it is outcomes as opposed to content based.

2.3 OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION AS CONTEXT FOR FACILITATION OF THEORY AND PRACTICE INTEGRATION

The old education system in South Africa was characterized by a fixed curriculum that was descriptive and detailed. It did not allow teacher-initiative or participation by learners or the public. The new system is aimed at making education more relevant, accessible and transparent to all. Outcomes in this context according to Spady (1994a:18) refer to demonstrations of the learner's highest development. He goes further to say that outcomes are the acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes that the learner must have in order to advance to the next level (Spady, 1994a:8). Kotze (1999:31) concurs that outcomes in an educational context refers to "the end product of learning".

According to the Government Gazette (Department of Education, 1998), outcomes in the OBE context refer to the end product of a learning process. The end product is the agreed and desired achievements within a particular context that the learner should be able to demonstrate. In terms of OBE in the South African Government Gazette (Department of Education, 2002:23) a learning outcome is a description of what (knowledge, skills and values) learners should demonstrate and be able to do at the end of the General Education and Training band. A set of learning outcomes should ensure integration (of theory and practice) and progression in the development of concepts, skills, and values through the assessment standards. The significant difference of the traditional education paradigm to that of the new OBE paradigm is that learning outcomes in the new paradigm do not prescribe content or methods.

2.3.1 Traditional education vs. Outcomes-Based Education paradigm

OBE can be viewed as a theory of education, as a systematic structure for education or as a classroom practice. OBE can be applied to a variety of educational restructurings that are focused on achievement of outcomes (Van Niekerk & Killen, 2000:93). Refer to Table 2.2 for a comparison between the traditional education and training system and an OBE and training system.

TABLE: 2. 2 COMPARISON BETWEEN TRADITIONAL AND OUTCOMES – BASED EDUCATION & TRAINING SYSTEMS

Traditional Education & Training System focus on **OBJECTIVES**	Outcomes – Based Education & Training System focus on **OUTCOMES**
Centered on what the teacher will do	Centered on what the learner will do
Describe the aim of teaching	Describe the end result of learning
Centered on the opportunities provided for learning	Put emphasis on how learning is used, particularly how it can be applied in new contexts
Entail approximation of the amount that can be learned in a specified amount of time	Necessitate flexibility with regard to allocation of time to achieve end results

(Adapted from Wiggins, 1999:103)

The table above indicates that the traditional education system was focused on objectives of education (teaching and learning) as opposed to outcomes (of teaching and learning) which is the focus of OBE. The table also indicates that the old system was teacher-centered where as in the OBE system or paradigm facilitation of learning is learner-centered. Traditional approaches to teaching and learning was focused on content while the new approach is focused on outcomes (Spady, 1994a:8).

The Government Gazette (Department of Education, 1998) states that OBE is a learner-centered, result – orientated approach to education that is built on the belief that all learners can learn and succeed. Furthermore learning institutions have the responsibility to encourage and provide the conditions for success. Similarly, Fakier & Waghid (2004) state that OBE is a system that is based on the belief that individuals have the capability to learn and demonstrate their learning after carrying out an educational activity.

2.3.2 Basic assumptions of Outcomes-Based Education

The definitions mentioned above are based on the three basic assumptions of OBE which are:

- All learners have the capacity to learn and succeed in different ways and at different times in their development
- Successful learning brings about increase in learning and lastly,
- The learning environment or conditions (in which learning occurs) directly impacts the success of the learning experience.

(Spady 1994a:9)

These three assumptions (which served as the rationale for the implementation of OBE in South Africa) are guided by four principles which are clarity of focus, expanded opportunity, high expectations and design down (Spady 1994a:11-20 and Spady & Marshall 1991:67).

2.3.2.1 Clarity of focus

The curriculum should be aimed at what the learner must be able to demonstrate at the end of the course. All learning and methods of facilitating and learning should be geared towards the outcome (Spady 1994a:11-20 and Spady & Marshall 1991:67).

2.3.2.2 Expanded opportunity

Facilitators of learning must allow more than one opportunity to learning if the learner is not successful in demonstrating competence. While there should be limits such as time frames and schedules to expanded learning opportunities, this should not be used to restrict learners from achieving competencies (Spady, 1994a:11-20 and Spady & Marshall 1991:67).

.

2.3.2.3 High expectations

Learners must be assessed against a pre-set criterion and not according to norm reference assessment whereby learners are assessed according to the performance of a group (Spady, 1994a:9). This means that the leaner should be able to demonstrate a range of learning experiences and capabilities in an authentic context (Spady, 1994a:11-20 and Spady & Marshall 1991:67).

2.3.3 Beliefs of Outcomes-Based Education

Linked to the principles of OBE are its underlying beliefs. In the South African context it means that:

- Learners must be encouraged and allowed to learn to their full potential
- Success will breed success
- Learners will build self-confidence as they progress
- The learning environment must be conducive for learning to take place

(Department of Education, 1995).

It is imperative that South African tertiary institutions adapt curricula to meet the requirements of OBE. Hence in terms of the National Qualifications Framework (SAQA, 2003) tertiary institutions responsible for social work training are required to conform to the assessment standards as prescribed by the SAQA and therefore the South African Council for Social Services Professionals (SACSSP). In terms of the standards set out by the NQF the social work qualification has a

theoretical as well as a practical component. The integration of theory and practice is purposefully aimed at enhancing the learner's competency and skills abilities (SAQA, 2003). Gibbs (1992:10-11) goes further and asserts that the approach to learning that learners will adopt is determined by the design of the course and assessment strategies which in essence relates to curriculum design.

2.3.4 Assessment in Outcomes-Based Education

In the OBE paradigm the learners' competencies and skills are assessed according to assessment strategies that are stated in standards; the focus of which is knowledge, skills and values/attitudes. Learning is facilitated and can occur outside the formal classroom setting. Expected learning outcomes assist facilitators of learning to focus on what they want learners to know and achieve in terms of knowledge and skills. Outcomes and specific to this study, ELOs, are therefore useful to guide and to inform lecturers regarding the knowledge and understanding that a social work student must acquire in order to advance to the next level (SAQA, 2003).

Gibbs (2006) asserts that assessment frames students' learning. Students will learn effectively if the assessment systems work well. This relates to lecturers giving feedback instead of just a mark for assignments for example. The assessment criteria must be clear and specific in order for the student to understand what is expected of him/her after completing a task i.e. rubrics should be explicit (Gibbs 2006:23-35).

Assessment in the context of OBE is a structured process of collecting evidence and making judgements about a learner's performance in terms of national standards of a particular qualification. It is done to diagnose, give recognition to and evaluate a learner's competence. It is also used for education and training purposes in order to collate learners' experiences of an educational programme. It measures how successful learners have been in achieving the learning outcomes (SAQA, 2003:8). Rust, O'Donovan & Price (2005); Biggs (2003) and McKenna

(2007) concur that there is a stronger emphasis on linking assessment to learning outcomes and making sure that these links are understood by assessors and students.

2.3.5 Models of Outcomes-Based Education

The nature and purpose of OBE is contested and the cause for much debate as it means different things to different people. Hence there are varies models of OBE with no single dominant model. Furthermore the disparity in OBE models stems from the distinction in terms of outcomes and different management systems to achieve outcomes. The models are unique to the political, cultural and historical contexts in which they are implemented (Spady & Marshal, 1991). The three models of OBE are discussed in Table 2.3.

TABLE: 2. 3 THREE OUTCOMES – BASED MODELS COMPARED

Traditional OBE	**Transitional OBE**	**Transformational OBE**
Approach: Content and outcomes based	Approach: Outcomes-based	Approach: Outcomes-based, open –system, empowerment -orientated
Characteristics: Clearly defined (narrow) outcomes drawn from syllabus, learners master small sections of content	Characteristics: Reflects higher order (broad) competencies, De-emphasises subject-matter tests Problem-solving & critical thinking Effective communication Affective & relational skills	Characteristics: Collaborative, flexible & trans-disciplinary

Focus: knowledge, skills, understanding & remembering content	Focus: Knowledge, skills & attitude	Focus: Role performance, knowledge, competencies & skills
Aim: To produce academically competent graduates	Aim: Equip learners with competencies to apply in real world contexts	Aim: Equip learners with knowledge, competencies & skills as life-long learners

Table 2.3 is a comparison of the three different models by drawing on literature by Brady (1996:5); Fakier & Waghid (2004:57); Spady (1994b:94); Van der Horst & McDonald (1997:20) and Department of Education (1997:19).These three models are dominant in OBE and represent the ongoing debates that continue to exist in OBE with regard to implementation of a model for practice. The variations in the three models stem from the different outcomes and management systems to achieve them. The model selected by the South African system is learner-centered and aimed at developing graduates that will contribute meaningfully to social and economic life (Department of Education, 2002:21).

OBE, the transformational model in particular, shares sentiments with the constructivist approach to learning. The latter was the rationale for the selecting constructivism as a view of learning in the context of OBE. Patton (2002) and Barkley et al. (2005) indicate that constructivism is an act of inquiry or meaning making in which learners produce and construct their own knowledge which is based on their prior learning or experiences. OBE in the South African context seems to be a combination of the transitional and transformational model.

2.4 CONSTRUCTIVIST LEARNING THEORY IN THE CONTEXT OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

Constructivist learning theory embraces basic principles of behaviourist and cognitive theories that support the notion that learning is a process through which

meaning is constructed or the process through which people make sense of their experiences (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). OBE learning assumes constructivism.

Constructivism was initially used to describe a theory of learning but is now more commonly used to mean a theory of knowledge that supports that the world is essentially complex, truth does not exist and much of what we know is contested by our beliefs and social environment. Furthermore, constructivist theorists assert that learning is a process in which knowledge (past and current knowledge or experiences) is applied in a 'real world context'; also referred to as social constructivism (Dalgarno, 2001).

There are two viewpoints in constructivist theories namely individual constructivist view and the social constructivist view. The individual view is that learning is a personal individualistic process of constructing knowledge which is based on the individual's former and current knowledge structure and therefore is an 'internal cognitive activity" (Marriam & Caffarella, 1999:261 - 262). This is also referred to as endogenous constructivism which emphasises the importance of self-directed or learner –directed discovery of knowledge (Dalgarno, 2001).

Social constructivist theory is focused on the learner's interaction with others that are more knowledgeable or skillful than him/her. Meaning is constructed by dialogical interaction with others (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). This is also called dialectical constructivism (Dalgarno, 2001). The latter emphasises the role of social interaction in the process of meaning construction. Exogenous constructivists on the other hand hold the view that learners must have some control over the sequence and choice of content and be afforded opportunity to actively construct their own knowledge which they can apply to real world contexts (Dalgarno, 2001).

Constructivist learning theories include methods such as active learning, discovery learning and knowledge construction. The lecturer as expert is not dismissed but this role is modified as the facilitator of learning, while the learners

construct knowledge by engaging with others in problem – solving (Dalgarno, 2001). Brooks and Brooks (in Tam, 2000:18) concur that the lecturer as facilitator encourages and accepts that the learner is independent and can take initiative. A variety of methods is used to facilitate learning and allows learners to engage with each other and the lecturer. In this context the facilitator of learning creates and maintains a collaborative, problem-solving learning environment for learners to construct their own knowledge while the facilitator acts as guide (Tam, 2000:20). This relates to active learning which is synonymous with constructivist learning and is particularly useful in understanding adult learning in the context of OBE.

2.4.1 Constructivist teaching and learning strategies that promotes the integration of theory and practice

Malcolm Knowles introduced the process model called andragogy which initially referred to the "art and science of helping adults to learn". This was further developed by Conner (2004:2) and Osman & Castle (2006:515) to refer to "learner-focused education for people of all ages." Adult learning is facilitated through engaging the adult learner in dialogue (Vella, 1994). The learning environment needs to be created where the adult learner can create and reflect on their own experiences and (social work) practices in an engaging way together with lecturers and where all participants are at liberty to interrogate assumptions of knowledge (one's own and that of others) and to critique and reflect upon such knowledge. This is also referred to as experiential learning which means to learn from experience (Amstutz, 1999:24).

2.4.1.1 Experiential learning

Experiential learning theory was developed by David Kolb in 1984 and is closely associated with the constructivist theory approach to learning (Driver, Squires, Ruschworth & Wood-Robinson, 1994). It refers to learning from one's lived experiences (Amstutz, 1999:24). Kolb (1984) cited in Atherton (2005) argues that experience is an input and learning is an output. Hence for the process of learning

to take place, experience (input) alone is not sufficient, but reflecting on one's experiences (output) is required for learning to take place (Kolb, 1984 as cited by Dykes 2009). This is in line with constructivist theory that learning (output) happens when people make sense of their experiences (input).

Kolb developed a four stage model of experiential learning (Atherton, 2005; Moore & Van Rooyen, 2002) which is illustrated figure 2.2. (Adapted from Kolb & Kolb, 2005)

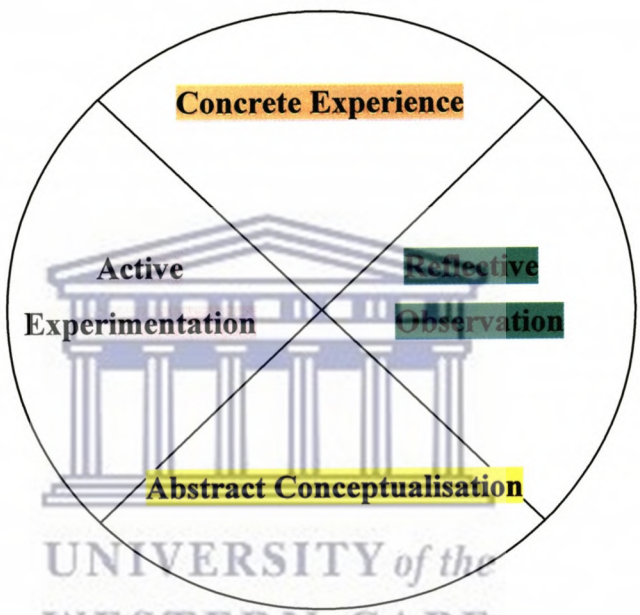


FIGURE: 2. 2 FOUR STAGE CYCLE OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Figure 2. 2 demonstrates the first stage as the learner's lived experience (Concrete Experience); secondly, making sense of the lived experience (Reflective Observation), thirdly, transforming the experience, by forming ideas and making generalizations about the experience (Abstract Conceptualisation) and lastly, transforming the ideas and generalizations by applying it in different contexts (Active Experimentation). The process of learning can start at any one of the four stages as it is continuous, meaning that the learner can go through the cycle many times during the learning process. The model lays emphasis on the context in which learning takes place (Ralphs & Buchler, 1998:10 as cited by Dykes, 2009).

The value of experiential learning is that learners deal with diversity by engaging directly with others. They are assisted in dealing with experiences by interpreting feelings and making sense of these. They can manage sensitive issues at a cognitive and affective level and learn more about themselves and are provided a safe environment to confront sensitive issues (Garcia & Von Soest, 1997:119-128 in Von Schlicht, 2003:84). A safe environment is based on respect for diversity and affirmation by the facilitator (Green & Von Schlicht, 2003) as well as the learner experience that his opinions are valued and respected (Collins & van Breda, 2010). It is focusing on learner's strengths (Green & Von Schlicht, 2003) and not his deficits (i.e. what he knows or do not know). Lastly, in a safe environment, assessment is open and transparent (Rust, 2002:148-149).

Experiential learning is relevant in the context of OBE as it is centered on what the learner is able to do after a learning experience .i.e. making sense of the learning experience by applying it in the real world context. Furthermore the learning environment allows for learning to take place (Department of Education, 1995). To implement experiential learning techniques and therefore OBE, the curriculum must have measurable outcomes stating what the learner is supposed to do and that the institution of learning should have a commitment that all learners have capacity to learn and grow (Jansen & Christie, 1999).

2.4.1.2 Issue- based learning/Problem based learning

Similar to experiential learning, issue based learning approach makes use of methods such as case studies and reflective exercises such as analyzing policies, or an article in a journal or newspaper. It "represents a particular construction about the process of learning that emphasizes the active role of the learner in constructing knowledge that is meaningful to them and increases their understanding". In addition it is regarded as an "active approach to learning that encourages reflexivity" by encouraging the learner to think about what he has learnt and how this knowledge can be used in practice (Whittaker 2009:123). This method of learning supports the links between theory and practice.

Thus the relationship between what social work practitioners think and what they do is in fact the relationship between theory and practice. Issue base learning promotes deep rooted learning as opposed to surface learning and encourages critical thinking and analytical reasoning (Oko 2008:94). Studies show that critical thinking and analytical reasoning is best achieved when students work collaboratively with others. This is a social constructivist approach to learning (Wenger, 1998 and Rust, 2002). In essence it is group work or cooperative learning which effects deep learning (Biggs, 1999). Students can integrate components of ideas including tasks and concepts and implement it in real world contexts.

2.4.1.3 Cooperative learning

Cooperative learning is the use of small groups (which is also used in experiential learning) in the class room setting. It is particularly useful in large classes, but more so because it enables the individual student to maximize his/her own learning and that of others in the group. In this regard the student is actively involved in the process of learning and constructing knowledge. (Bitzer, 2004).

Cooperative learning approaches to facilitate learning are based on social constructionist theories developed by psychologists such as Lev Vygotsky (1978). It simply means that people learn by engaging with others or the development of the learner's understanding requires learners to be actively involved in the process of meaning making (Gail Jones & Breader-Araje, 2002).

This is concurred by Bozalek (2009) that the learning environment needs to be created where the adult learner can create and reflect on their own experiences and (social work) practices in an engaging way together with lecturers. Furthermore learners should be at liberty to interrogate assumptions of knowledge and to critically reflect on such knowledge (academic discourse). It is when learners engage with each other and their teachers about knowledge, skills and attitudes that deep learning is generated (Biggs, 1999). Cooperative learning like any other

method of learning is not without challenges. One of the greatest challenges with this method according to Bacon (2005) is that of poor assessment design. In this regard Johnson, Johnson & Stanne (2000) cite five conditions for cooperative learning to be effective which is illustrated in Table 2.4.

TABLE: 2. 4 CONDITIONS FOR COOPERATIVE LEARNING

CONDITION	CHARACTERISTICS
INTERDEPENDENCE	Students need each other to achieve the criteria for assessment to be successful
INTERACTION	Students need to have tasks that requires that they engage in a meaningful way in order to meet the criteria/outcome
INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP ACCOUNTABILITY	Each student is accountable to the group and for his own development.
TEAM SKILLS	In engaging with each other particular skills are targeted such as ability to work with others, collaboration, participation, delegation etc.
FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION	The group must reflect and evaluate the process of cooperative work done as a collective

From the table above it can be suggested that the assessment in cooperative learning and therefore OBE should be constructed in such a way that students are required to work collaboratively, meaning that each one should have a specific role and responsibility to the group (task). The assessment criteria need to be specific in terms of self-reflection and accountability towards the group (members). Most importantly particular skills must be targeted for the purpose of development and growth to advance to the next level (Johnson et al., 2000).

2.4.1.4 Collaborative learning

Most educators regard cooperative and collaborative learning as being the same and use the two terms interchangeably to refer to group learning. For epistemological reasons, Barkley et al (2005) make several distinctions between the two approaches. The first is that in cooperative learning groups are used to support facilitation of learning according to traditional classroom comprehension and teaching. A second view is that cooperative learning is a sub-category of collaborative learning while the third view is that on a continuum, cooperative learning is most structured while collaborative learning is regarded as least structured. The key difference between the two is their goals. The goal of cooperative learning is for students to work together providing and receiving mutual support to find ways of understanding, while the goal of collaborative learning is to develop independent, articulate and reflective thinkers. As is the case with cooperative learning, collaborative learning has its roots in social constructivism (Barkley et al., 2005:5-7).

Collaborative learning has three key features. The first is intentional design; meaning that the facilitation of learning is structured according to predetermined learning techniques. The second is working together in pairs or a small group facilitated through predetermined learning activities to meet learning outcomes. The third is that meaningful learning occurs as students' knowledge increase or they gain deeper understanding of course concepts. The learning techniques and task must be designed to achieve learning outcomes (Barkley et al., 2005:4). The authors provide five categories of collaborative (and cooperative) learning techniques (CoLTS) which is tabled below.

TABLE 2.5 COLLABORATIVE (COOPERATIVE) LEARNING TECHNIQUES

Techniques for discussion	
Think-Pair Share	Students think individually for a few minutes, discuss & compare responses which facilitates more and effective participation in whole class discussions
Round Robin	Facilitators structuring brainstorming sessions so that all students participate whereby the facilitator moves from one student to the next.
Buzz Groups	Discuss course related questions, generating lots of ideas & views which helps to improve whole class discussion
Talking Chips	Student shows a token signaling his wish to make a contribution to the discussion which promotes equal opportunity for participation.
Three-Step Interview	Student pairs interview each other, report to another pair which promotes networking and communication skills
Critical Debate	Students assume and argue an issue that is contrary to their own which develops critical thinking and challenges existing assumption
Techniques for Reciprocal Teaching	
Note-Taking Pairs	Students compare their notes with others in the group to create an improved version which helps with note-taking skills and to acquire missing information
Learning Cell	Students use a quiz by developing questions about a learning activity which engage students about content, challenging and developing deep levels of thought.
Fishbowl	Students' use of concentric circles which provide opportunities to model and observe group processes in a discussion setting.
Role Play	Students assume a different identity and act out a scenario which promotes learning by doing.
Jigsaw	Students develop knowledge about a assigned topic and then transfer to each other which motivates deep learning in order to transfer knowledge to peers

Test-Taking Teams	Students prepare for a test in groups, have students do individual test, then retake in groups which helps to improve understanding of subject matter as they learn test-taking strategies.
Techniques for Problem Solving	
Think-Aloud Pair Problem Solving (TAPPS)	Students discuss problems in the group/pairs, focusing on the problem solving process which helps students identify logic or process errors.
Send-A-Problem	Students try to solve a problem as a group, passing responses to another group and do the same to a third group which practice thinking skills and differentiate among a variety of solutions.
Case Study	Students review a real world situation; develop a solution which provides abstract principles/theories that students find relevant.
Structured Problem Solving	Students are provided with a structured format to solve a problem which divides problem solving into manageable chunks. Students learn to identify, analyse and solve problems in an organized manner.
Analytical Teams	Students assume roles and tasks to critically read and participate in class which helps them to understand the different activities that constitute a critical analysis.
Group Investigation	Students plan, conduct and report on a task which teaches students research procedures and gain in-depth knowledge about a specific area.
Techniques Using Graphic Information Organisers	
Affinity Grouping	Students generate ideas, identify common themes, sort & organise ideas which helps to identify and classify elements of learning matter/topic
Group Grid	Students categorise information in a grid according to category rubrics which helps with clarifying conceptual categories and develop sorting skills.
Team Matrix	Students differentiate between similar concepts by identifying significant features that are present or absent which helps with distinguishing between concepts that are closely related.

Sequence Chains	Students graphically depict and analyse a series of events, actions, roles or decisions which helps to understand processes, cause and effect as well as chronological series and organise information in an orderly, coherent progression.
Word Webs/ Concept mapping	Students generate a list of ideas; organise them using graphs, identifying the relationships by drawing lines or arrows to represent the connections which helps with making links between curriculum content, theory concepts and learning goals.
Techniques Focusing on Writing	
Dialogue Journals	Students use journal to record thoughts & experiences that they exchange with peers which helps to connect course work with students' experiences while engaging with others in a content-related and thought-provoking manner
Round Table	Students respond to prompts by writing words or phrases which they circulate which help to identify the important aspects of a learning activity through answering and questioning
Dyadic Essays	Students write essays and model answers which they exchange and respond to and compare to the model answer which helps with identifying the most important elements of a learning activity, formulating and answering questions.
Peer Editing	Students critically review and provide editorial feedback on a peer's work which helps with development of critical editing skills, giving constructive feedback before written work is submitted.
Collaborative Writing	Students produce a written exercise together which helps learning and conducting the stages of writing more effectively.
Team Anthologies	Students develop a compilation of course readings with their reactions to the material which helps with understanding the research process
Paper Seminar	Students write and present a paper, receive and give feedback, engaging in discussion of the issues in the paper. It helps with engaging in deep discussion about their research, providing feedback and focused attention on individual's work.

Table 2.5 above is extracted from Barkley, Cross & Major (2005:101 – 267). It is evident that the strategies and techniques are aimed at the construction of meaning and to apply new meaning (or knowledge) in the real world context. These techniques are not only relevant for classroom learning but can also be employed in the fieldwork setting (in social work for example). Therefore the section that follows relates to application of social constructionist principles in social work supervision as a means to facilitate theory and practice integration.

2.5 APPLICATION OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVIST PRINCIPLES IN SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION AS A MEANS TO FACILITATE INTEGRATION OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

Social work supervision according to Botha (2000:11) is a learning process that occurs within the boundaries of a mutual relationship between a supervisor (social worker) and a supervisee (subordinate or student social worker) in which knowledge, skills and insight develops for the purpose of successful and effective social work practice. Kadushin (1992), who is the regarded as the classic author on social work supervision, identifies three functions of supervision, i.e. educational, supportive and administrative supervision. The author refers to and describes the process of supervision as forming part of an ecological system with various components, therefore suggesting that supervision does not happen in isolation. There are specific responsibilities and roles associated with supervisors and supervisees. In order to facilitate these roles or functions Hawkins & Shohet (2000:118) provides an outline in terms of supervisory responsibilities. Table 2.6 refers.

TABLE: 2. 6 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SUPERVISOR AND STUDENT IN THE SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY	SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITY
develop self awareness	ensure safe space for laying out issues
identify practice issues	help with exploration and thinking
be open to receive feedback	challenge unsafe or incompetent practice
monitor effectiveness of supervision	share experiences and skill appropriately

Source: Proctor, 1988 as adapted by Nzira & Williams (2008:167)

Table 2. 6 indicates the roles and responsibilities of the supervisor as facilitator of learning and that of student social worker in the teaching and learning context/relationship. Literature by Lit & Shek (2007) indicates the importance of the relationship and roles of the practice teacher (field supervisor) and student in social constructivist learning approach.

Drawing on various literatures on constructivism, Lit & Shek (2007) included eight principles of social constructionism in a study conducted with social work students in China. These included a critical and reflective attitude towards knowledge; enhancing the student's interpretation of theory; critical and reflective thinking; awareness of value, historical and cultural relativity, collaboration, a focus on students' strengths to perform tasks and accepting the continued existence of uncertainty. They found that the eight principles were applicable in student supervision in fieldwork practice and therefore the models in social work supervision as the next paragraphs and subsequent table will show.

2.5.1 Models in social work supervision

Literature (Kadushin, 1992; Shardlow & Doel, 1996; Botha, 2000; Engelbrecht, 2001) indicates that there are various models of supervision for social workers and student social workers. Botha distinguishes between six models. Refer to Table 2.7.

TABLE: 2. 7 MODELS OF SUPERVISION

MODEL	FOCUS OF THE MODEL
STRUCTURAL MODEL	The relationship between the supervisor and the social worker
DEVELOPMENTAL	Mastering skills and the application thereof as well as self-awareness
GROWTH –ORIENTATED MODEL	The social worker's personal and professional development and growth
ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL	The organization's autonomy in terms of supervision and administrative function of the social worker
THEORY MODEL	Theoretical frameworks, discourse , programmes and practice frameworks
HOLISTIC MODEL	The relationship between theoretical frameworks and academic material as well as the real life experiences in the day to day practice context

Table 2. 8 above illustrates that in the structural model the focus is on the relationship between the supervisor and the social worker. This relates to the principle of collaboration according to Lit & Shek (2007). The developmental model is focused on mastering skills and the application thereof as well as self-awareness.

In terms of the growth –orientated model the focus is on the social worker's (therefore student social worker's) personal and professional development and growth. The organizational model is focused on the organization's autonomy in terms of supervision and administrative function of the social worker while theory model is centered on theoretical frameworks, discourse, programmes and practice frameworks. Finally the holistic model of supervision is centered on the relationship between theoretical frameworks and academic material as well as the real life experiences in the day to day practice context (Botha 2000:92). The

models reiterate the eight principles of constructivist theories of learning and practice as they entail critical, reflective and collaboration in the facilitation of learning and social work practice.

Engelbrecht (2001) includes in addition to these, three specific models relating to social work student supervision in particular. These are: Role-system model- which is focused on communication, expectations, delivery, contact and flexibility. The Integrated theory and practice model is aimed at facilitating learning, and lastly the Competency-based model which is in essence the outcomes of all the above-mentioned models because they are all aimed at competence development (Engelbrecht 2001:64). This model which was developed by Shardlow & Doel (1996) is relevant in the South African context of social work supervision and student supervision because the White Paper on Social Welfare (Department of Welfare, 1997) and the White Paper on Higher Education (Department of Education, 1997) respectively, promote outcomes based practice and learning. In terms of this model, outcomes rather than process are emphasized and must be demonstrated with regard to particular learning areas (Engelbrecht, 2001:65).

Five factors relating to the learning areas in supervision are, Place, Person, Problem, Process and Professional (Kadushin, 1992), also known as the 5 P's programme. In terms of the 5 P's -Programme the supervisor and supervisee form a partnership and are guided by principles of Adult Learning (Kadushin, 1992) and therefore constructivist learning principles. Tsien & Tsui (2007) in a study of participative learning and teaching, observed that field instructors and students formed a partnership that was inclusive, collaborative, built on mutual trust and a strong relationship. The relationship between field instructor and student is strengthened when teaching and assessment methods are negotiated between the two parties which reduces the power dynamics and makes assessment less anxiety provoking (Tsien & Tsui, 2007).

The 5 P's model forms part of the education and evaluation function of supervision. It allows supervisors to conduct educational assessments, develop educational programmes and assessment tools. The learning areas are Place (social service organisation), Person (client system on micro, mezzo or macro level), Problem (the challenge that the client system is confronted with), Process (intervention process) and Professional person (the social worker or social work student). The social worker or social work student is assessed in terms of his /her knowledge, skills and attitude regarding the 5 P's. In addition to the aforementioned there are particular functions of supervision to ensure and effect that the best interests of clients are met (Kadushin, 1992).

2.5.2 Functions of the social work supervisor

Based on the work by Kadushin (1992), Botha (2000), Goldstein (2001), Strozier, Barnett-Queen & Bennett (2000), Engelbrecht (2001) concur that the three main roles or functions of the social work supervisor are supportive, administrative and educational.

2.5.2.1 Supportive supervision

Supportive supervision is primarily for effective and productive execution of tasks that would serve the best interest of clients. It can therefore not be separated from the other two functions. Its purpose is similar as the other two functions which are to enable students to deliver effective service to clients. Supportive supervision relates to social work values such as warmth, acceptance, empathy, positive regard, encouragement and a safe space to ventilate. This calls for a positive, mutually respected relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee (Botha 1985: 247). Kadushin (1992), Botha (2000), Goldstein (2001), Strozier, Barnett-Queen & Bennett (2000), Engelbrecht (2001) argue that these roles are performed interchangeably and are in no way independent from each other.

2.5.2.2 Administrative supervision

Botha (2000:37-79) makes three distinctions with regard to the administrative function of supervision, namely planning, organizing, activating and control. This entails the preparation and orientation for (students') placement, implementation of intervention (with clients), management of the students' workload, monitoring and termination for the fieldwork programme. The best interest of clients is the most important responsibility of the supervisor (of the social service agency) therefore student supervision and coordination of placement as well as the students' workload is the responsibility of the supervisor. According to Kadushin (1992:19-23) there is a link between the educational and administrative function of supervision.

2.5.2.3 Educational supervision

Goldstein (2001:10-27) asserts that knowledge must be transferred in such a way that the learning objectives are met. According to Botha (2000:89) the second most important responsibility of the field supervisor is the educational function of supervision. This involves appropriate knowledge, attitude /values and skills to provide effective service delivery to clients. The emphasis of educational supervision is concepts, theories, research, skills and teaching techniques/methods/strategies (Strozier, Barnett-Queen & Bennett 2000:35). Educational techniques are purposefully facilitated mostly during the implementation phase of the supervision process that is the learning takes place during this process. The educational, administrative and supportive functions of supervision are inter-related and form an integral part of the other (Botha, 2000:37).

Learning is stimulated by (student) social worker being motivated to ensure better job satisfaction. The (student) social worker must understand the purpose of and how to apply the new knowledge in real world context. Group supervision (and therefore cooperative learning) is encouraged as it allows for positive competition

and increases the need to learn more. Supervisors should therefore explain the importance of the knowledge that is to be acquired (Kadushin & Harkness, 2002:176-192). Learning is most effective when students are part of the facilitation of learning (active learning and participative learning). Therefore facilitators should ensure maximum interaction from the learner.

Students learn better if their learning challenges are addressed. Hence students should be part of the planning (collaborative and participative learning) of supervision sessions to address such challenges. It becomes necessary then for facilitators to adapt to the students' learning style and pace in order to best address their educational needs (Kadushin & Harkness 2002:176-192).

Caspi & Reid (2002) also developed what they call a Task-Centered Model for educational supervision. The supervisee and supervisor select the supervision objectives and structure the tasks together in an attempt to achieve the supervision and learning goals. The content is not prescribed but rather procedures are developed instead because goals and objectives vary from one setting to another. Furthermore student social workers have different levels of prior knowledge, experience and skills when they enter the fieldwork practice. Some settings require more focus of particular skills than others depending on the level (macro, mezzo, micro) of intervention. The choice regarding the content for supervision is influenced by the fact that social work learning institutions have specific curricula focus. This is further complicated by differing input by various parties involved in the supervisory relationship (Caspi & Reid, 2002:1 - 42).

Based on the aforementioned the Task-Centered Model appears to be best suited for educational supervision in the context of OBE as it relates to the principles of learner –centeredness in that in structuring supervision the focus is on particular knowledge, skills and values that the student social worker is required to apply in the real world context (Rust, 2002:150). Hence central to this model of educational supervision is planning and organizing supervision to such an extent that it meets the stated learning outcomes.

The following is a table of different experiential learning techniques that promotes theory and practice integration in student supervision as described by various authors.

TABLE: 2. 8 EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING TECHNIQUES FOR STUDENT SUPERVISION

TECHNIQUE	DESCRIPTION
Role-plays	Students demonstrate knowledge, skills and values by acting out an illustration of these outcomes (Toseland & Rivas 2001:120)
Skills training/development	These include demonstration of life skills, basic skills, professional skills and personal skills during laboratory sessions, making use of case studies (Van der Horst & McDonald, 2001:9) as well as writing skills (Taibbi, 1995:137).
Socio-drama	This is similar to role-plays where the student (usually in a group) illustrates a particular problem situation by demonstrating knowledge, skills and values (Berk, 2000:236).
Modeling & self disclosure	This technique encourages students as well as supervisor to share their thoughts and feelings through which learning is constructed (Jacobs, Masson & Harvill, 2002:129)

From the table above it can be concluded that the use of experiential techniques helps student to learn new behaviour and means to apply in a real world context. The student engages with manageable tasks by engaging in the techniques illustrated above, which provide a scaffold to engage in more complex tasks as they develop and achieve learning outcomes. The supervisor assists by re-enforcement through which learning is constructed.

2.6 SUMMARY

Six themes were identified to frame the study. These were objectives of student learning, OBE as context for facilitation of theory and practice, constructivist learning theory, application of social constructivist principles in social work (student) supervision, approaches to learning and OBE in the context of social work teaching and learning.

Based on the literature that I have reviewed it is clear that OBE has many challenges that are yet to be adequately assessed and defined. The limitations with OBE in the South African context remain as they are implemented in under-resourced learning institutions and disadvantage learners who require a particular style of teaching. The literature shows that issues such as time frames lead to limitations to learning that result in students not achieving the expected outcomes.

I was influenced by adult learning theories and behaviourist theories that seemed to link to the principles of OBE such as social constructivism, namely, individual constructivist view and the social constructivist view. The second motivation for selecting these theoretical perspectives is their adaption to teaching and learning strategies such as experiential learning, issue based learning and cooperative learning.

Most of the discussion in this chapter concerned learning theories as these relate directly to the aim of the study which is to explore and describe the challenges that participants experience with regard to integration of theory and practice. It is clear from the literature that the methods, strategies and techniques used to facilitate learning determine the learning that will take place and therefore the demonstration of competencies that students have. Furthermore, research shows that teaching environments impact significantly on students learning.

The literature al so indicates that there are generally two approaches to learning i.e. surface approach and deep approach and that students will most likely not

maintain a deep approach if the learning environment is not conducive and assessment criteria are not clear. However this does not mean that learner success is dependent on these variables alone because research also indicates that 'some students maintain a surface approach' even in the most conducive learning environments. A conducive environment in the context of teaching and learning means that the resources such as technical support and venues are in place and are utilized to develop the learner's full potential. Similarly, the facilitators of learning should be equipped with the necessary skills to ensure that leaning and development will take place.

Student learning is linked to the student's individual potential and the particular way that they learn and there are many different ways in which students learn. Therefore learning in educational institutions should be about facilitating the ways in which learners understand, experience, and conceptualize the world around them. Therefore it is imperative that facilitators of learning understand how knowledge is constructed.

Literature on student assessment in Higher Education (HE) indicates that assessment methods and systems guide student learning and that students prefer assessment tasks that they think are relevant in the real world and that someone in the real world would possibly do such a task or similar one. Research also indicates that students prefer assessment methods and strategies that provide choice (of tasks to be done), allow for interaction and engaging with others, create opportunity for independent or group work and that are issue based.

From the literature studied it appears that although there are challenges with OBE it does have the potential to make teaching and learning achievable given that the resources in terms of teaching and learning support is provided as the facilitation of learning in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) require creativity in order to meet required outcomes. In addition, literature seems to indicate that OBE is not fully seen in the context of the supported theories and principles and maybe more

related to the understanding of those responsible for implementing models of OBE than to the actual paradigm of this educational approach.

Finally, there are indeed many challenges with regard to OBE in the context of UWC, social work teaching and learning itself. Much of the critique seems to be aimed at those responsible for developing exit level outcomes, rather than against OBE as a model itself.

The review of the literature has attempted to provide the reader with the main principles and philosophies regarding OBE, learning theories relevant in OBE specifically, constructivist learning theories that promote deep learning including theory and practice integration.

The next chapter discusses the research methodology employed in the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The goal of the study was to explore and describe the challenges experienced by social work lecturers, field supervisors and third year social work students in the Social Work Department at UWC with regard to theory and practice integration. The goal was adapted during the course of the study to include the experiences of students at a different university with a similar background but a different supervision structure to those of UWC students. Hence I conducted a focus group session with seven third year social work students at NMMU and the data were used in a comparison between the two groups.

3.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study were to:

- explore and describe the teaching strategies and techniques employed by lectures to facilitate the integration of theory and practice
- explore and describe the challenges experienced by fieldwork supervisors in terms of the methods used for supervision to facilitate theory and practice integration in fieldwork education
- explore and describe students' experiences of the strategies and techniques employed by lectures and field supervisors to facilitate the integration of theory and practice in fieldwork education
- explore and describe students' perspectives on personal obstacles and challenges to integrate theory and practice

In Chapter One some introductory comments were made regarding the research methodology. This chapter aims to describe in detail:

- the methodological approach that was used;
- the research design that was used;
- the research strategy adopted;
- the research setting and population of the study;
- the sampling strategy that was used for a qualitative case study;
- the methods and processes for qualitative data collection;
- the methods used for qualitative data analysis;
- qualitative data verification procedures within the case study inquiry;
- the limitations and delimitations of the study;
- the ethical consideration adhered to in the process of the study and
- a conclusion of the chapter

3.3 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Methodological approach refers to the process of research and the particular way in which the researcher conceptualizes this process (Creswell, 2007:17). The goal and research question of this study pointed to the selection of a qualitative research approach. Creswell (2007:37) defines qualitative research as follows:

"Qualitative research begins with assumptions, a world view, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a qualitative natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report ... includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, and a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and it extends the literature or signals a call for action."

The qualitative research approach was selected because I envisaged embarking on a "process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry

that explore a social or human problem" (Creswell, 1998:15). According to Creswell (2007:16 & 37) qualitative research begins with certain philosophical assumptions. In choosing this research approach I was influenced by the ontological assumption that multiple perspectives of reality exist. My epistemological assumption is that knowledge (on the challenges of theory and practice integration) will derive from the experiences of the people involved with the issue and that I must get close to the participants being studied in order to explore and describe their perspectives. I concluded that my research required the characteristics as promoted by distinguished scholars in qualitative research like Creswell (2007), Denzin & Lincoln (2005), Yin (2003) and Patton (2002), in that the research would have to rely on interpretive inquiry, inductive analysis and the meaning that participants hold on the issue as well as explore and describe the depth, richness and complexity of the issue or phenomenon.

Relying on interpretive inquiry meant that I endeavoured to understand rather than to find explanations for participants' experiences (Babbie and Mouton, 2001: 28-31). In following an inductive approach to analysis I preferred not to start with a given theory about the integration of theory and practice but rather let the results of the study point towards hypotheses about the issue and indicate theoretical explanations. Babbie & Mouton (2001: 273) and Spicer (2004:295) concur that "qualitative research implies an inductive approach in which theory is derived from empirical data".

There are distinct characteristics of qualitative research that makes it different to quantitative research. Quantitative research involves a formal and structured method through which data is collected by using questionnaires that are statistically analyzed and presented; the focus of which is on outcomes or results (De Vos, Fouche & Venter, 2002:364). Qualitative research on the other hand is conducted in the natural setting of the participants; the focus is on the research process (not the outcome); the perspectives of those being studied are emphasized; the aim is "thick" descriptions and understanding of participants experiences; to understand the phenomenon in its context; it is an inductive approach and the

researcher is the "main instrument" in the process (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:270). I thus conclude that qualitative research approach is by its nature guided by an exploratory, descriptive and contextual design.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

An "exploratory-descriptive design" as proposed by Babbie & Mouton (2001:79-80) was used as this was the most appropriate means to satisfy my concern for better understanding the challenges experienced by lecturers, field supervisors and students with regard to theory and practice integration.

This approach is often used in studies where the topic or issue being studied is relatively new. Selecting this research design therefore contributed to the identification of the feasibility for more comprehensive studies, for example interventions relating to theory and practice integration in the context of ELOs and hence determined priorities for future studies in this regard.

3.5 RESEARCH STRATEGY

A research strategy may refer to the approach to the inquiry; the strategies/traditions of inquiry or the variety of methods in which a study can be done (Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Tesch, 1990). Creswell (2007:35) refers to the following "traditions of inquiry" for guiding the methods employed; biography, phenomenology, case study, grounded theory and ethnography. The goal and objectives of this study indicated that a case-study strategy would be most appropriate.

Yin (2003:13) defines a case study approach as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a temporary phenomenon within its real life context". According to Creswell (2007:244), a case study approach is used to study a situation over a specific period of time ("bounded by time"), within in a particular setting, using in-depth data collection which includes many different sources of information that

is "rich in context A case can be a progamme or several programmes, an event, an activity or individual(s), bounded by time and place. Qualitative case studies are distinguished in two ways i.e. "the size of the bounded case" and the "intent of the case analysis" (Creswell, 2007:74-76). Case studies are also differentiated by means of the intent of the case study. These are: the single instrumental case; the collective or multiple cases and thirdly the intrinsic case (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003 in Creswell 2007:75).

I opted for an instrumental case study strategy. The instrumental case study facilitates the "understanding of a particular issue" (Creswell, 2007:45 and Fouché, 2005:272). The issue for understanding in my research was theory and practice integration where the case (Intermediate Fieldwork module) was used as a vehicle to study and understand this particular issue. The object of study was theory and practice integration in a particular module, (Intermediate Fieldwork module) during 2008 (nine months) on third year level, in which students, lecturers and field supervisors were challenged to integrate theory and practice. The setting of this case is discussed section 3.5 and the time boundary is the nine month period that third year students were doing practical work.

Patton (2002:297) alerts us to the fact that when a researcher wants to get an in-depth understanding of a such a single case, the case is likely to be made up of many "smaller cases" – the stories of specific individuals, units and groups or critical incidents and as such is "layered' by different experiences. This was also the case in this research, as will become clear in the following discussions. Similarly, Creswell (2007:196) also recommends that in writing up the research an extensive description of the case and its context must be provided to give the reader a full picture of the setting and the issue.

The next section provides a summary of the research setting.

3.6 THE CASE AND RESEARCH SETTING

Creswell (1998:153) indicates that an elaborate discussion on the setting in which the case is set needs to be provided in order to indicate how the issue of research fits into the setting.

3.6.1 Institutional context

The case of this research (Intermediate Field Work module) is set in the Department of Social work at the University of Western Cape. UWC is regarded as a Historically Disadvantaged Institution (HDI) that was set up for so-called 'coloured'[1] students during the apartheid era. Its population continues to be predominantly [2]black and coloured students. The UWC's open admissions policy allows students who have been disadvantaged in terms of preparedness for tertiary education, to gain access to the university. Many of these students have teaching and learning challenges as their former schooling negated a culture of learning and critical thinking.

3.6.2 The Intermediate fieldwork module in context of the social work programme

The curriculum on third year level includes theory modules pertaining to Children, Families, HIV/AIDS and Social Inclusion, Women's and Gender Studies, Welfare Law and Psychology or Sociology. The theory modules and the Intermediate Fieldwork module are taught simultaneously on the third year level of study (University of the Western Cape, 2008).

This education process is facilitated by way of fieldwork placements at a social service agency and laboratory sessions on campus by "campus supervisors." The

[1] Under apartheid the term "coloureds" was used to refer to people who were of mixed racial descent, usually a 'mix' of European and indigenous African.
[2]Under apartheid the term "blacks" was used to refer to the indigenous African people who were not of European descent.

purpose of this fieldwork practice module is to develop the students' knowledge, skill and attitude for demonstrating competencies through different learning opportunities (SAQA, 2003:8). Field supervisors employed at agencies in the community are responsible for the assessment of the students' fieldwork supervision.

The long-term objective of the practical training in the third year is to continue preparing students for competent future practice as social workers. To reach the long term objective of the Intermediate Fieldwork programme, students should demonstrate the application and integration of strengths-based and social inclusion theory, in social work, on micro, mezzo and macro practice. The focus is on assessment and intervention in areas of Child and Youth Well-being, Family Well-being, HIV/AIDS and Social Inclusion. In addition to the aforementioned, students should demonstrate the ability to follow the social work process within the frame-work of strength-based and anti-discriminatory social work on micro, mezzo and macro level. A third outcome is demonstration of awareness of the needs, strengths and challenges of the community, groups, individuals and families. The fourth outcome is ability to demonstrate knowledge of the objectives, functioning, policies and resources of social services agencies.

Students should also demonstrate evidence of personal growth with regard to compassion, creativity, self-awareness, reliability, commitment, motivation, confidence and assertiveness. Furthermore they must show a positive attitude towards active participation in the education process and to develop ability for self-evaluation. They should also demonstrate the ability to communicate both verbally and in writing as well as demonstrate ability to use social work principles, skills, roles and values. With regard to the SACSSP code of conduct, they should demonstrate professional and ethical awareness by applying social work values and ethics as well as by working within a strength-based and anti-

discriminatory framework; and lastly, exercise critical reflection in professional competence.[3]

In order to increase student capacity in achieving these demanding outcomes, from the start of the first semester the students attend weekly laboratory sessions which provide an opportunity for simulated exercises on micro, mezzo and macro levels. They are then placed at a social service agency for one day of the week for the duration of the two semesters of the academic year. Their general learning needs are assessed during weekly supervision sessions of twenty minutes for individual supervision and bi-weekly group supervision of one hour is used to discuss reports and challenges experienced at the agencies. The campus supervisor is responsible for facilitating a programme of monitoring the students' personal growth and experiential learning by means of simulated exercises, which will prepare the students for 'real' encounters in fieldwork practice. The field supervisors are responsible for monitoring the students' growth and progress at the agency. At the end of the each semester the students carry out two presentations on the work done at the agency, in which they are expected to integrate appropriate theoretical models on strength-based, anti-discriminatory practice.

3.7 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

According to Babbie & Mouton (2001:174) the population of a study refers to the collective factors that the people or objects being studied have in common. In this study it is UWC, the third year training programme and the challenges relating to theory and practice integration in the intermediate fieldwork module. I have opted to "limit my population" to four sampling units namely social work lecturers in the social work department at UWC, field supervisors and third year social work students from UWC and NMMU.

[3] Students are assisted from first year level with these competencies and in continuing professional development after graduation. Learning in the social work profession is thus continuous.

The population of the study was the role-players involved in the intermediate fieldwork module at UWC during 2008. These included all forty eight students registered for the intermediate field work module. The eight lecturers who had taught this cohort of students up to 2008 were also included. Thirty two field supervisors who had offered placement to UWC students from 2005 to 2008 were targeted. These were field supervisors who have terminated placements due to poor performance by students and those who have indicated concern about the lack of knowledge, skills and values from our students.

As the process of data collection and first analysis unfolded, a comparative question arose about students' experiences of integrating theory into practice; i.e. "Would students with more or less the same profile, but exposed to different supervision structures, have similar or different experiences?" After consultation with my supervisor, I decided to include students from NMMU, not for cross-case analysis because this would have meant adopting a different research design and goal, but to broaden the focus of the research in order to understand the specific primary case better. I wanted to obtain detailed and in depth understanding of the research issue. Creswell (1994:17 & 19) and Patton (2002:42-44) support the idea that flexibility of design is a characteristic of qualitative research and researchers must be responsive to such open-ended designs and focus in order to reflect an increased understanding of the problem. Hence, the rationale to include a focus group session with third year social work students from NMMU which is a "historically white university"[4] and whose student population is drawn mainly from the Eastern Cape, consisting of a majority of coloured and black students. The total population thus included four different groups. These were third year social work students (UWC and NMMU), field supervisors and lecturers.

[4] Under apartheid universities in South Africa were divided along racial lines and higher education institutions were designated accordingly (Boughey, 2004).

3.7.1 Profile of UWC student population (in the Intermediate Fieldwork programme)

Below is a presentation with regard to first language of the entire population from which the UWC student sample was drawn. As indicated in the figure the majority of the student population and therefore respondents is isiXhosa speakers.

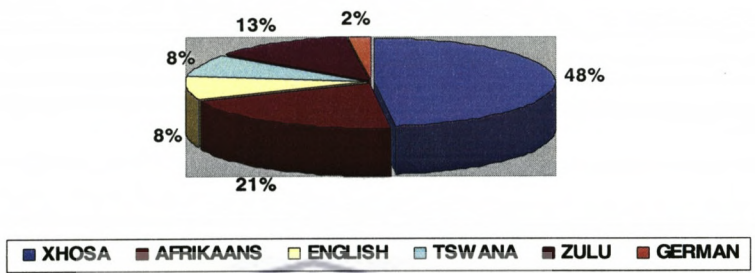


FIGURE: 3. 1 FIRST LANGUAGE OF THE UWC POPULATION GROUP

Forty eight percent (23) of the population is Xhosa speaking. Twenty one percent (10) is Afrikaans speaking. Eight percent (4) are English speaking which is the language of instruction at UWC. Eight percent (4) are Tswana speaking; 13 percent (6) is Zulu and two percent (1) German speaking; this was an exchange student. Most of the students were fluent in at least two official languages.

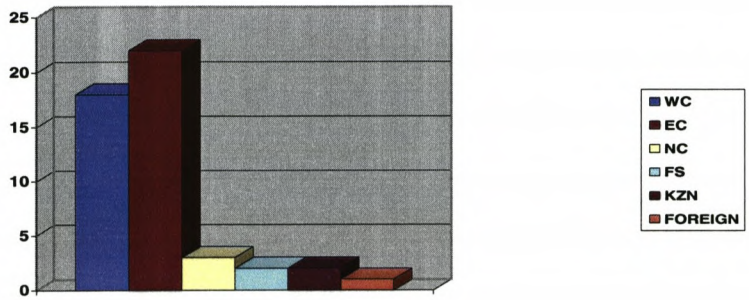


FIGURE: 3. 2 GEOGRAPHICAL ORIGIN OF UWC STUDENT POPULATION

Figure 3.2 is a presentation of the geographical areas from where the students originate. This is significant for the study as it is an indication of the fact that most students come from disadvantaged communities or backgrounds which are associated with inadequate resources of communities and schools that are under resourced and impoverished; i.e. the rural areas of South Africa. Thirty eight percent (18 students) are from the Western Cape (mostly urban areas with relatively rich resources) while the overwhelming majority are originally from the Eastern Cape, mostly rural areas; forty six percent (22 students). Six percent (3 students) of the population originates from the Northern Cape (rural areas). Four percent of the population comes from the Free State (2 students) and Kwazulu Natal respectively (2) and one is a foreign student from Germany which constitute two percent of the population. The numbers confirm literature by Bozalek (2009) that most of UWC students are drawn from the Eastern and Western Cape provinces.

3.7.2 Profile of NMMU students population

The population of NMMU was twenty eight students who are mostly from previously disadvantaged schools. They were all students in the social work department and in their third year of study. The medium of instruction is English.

3.7.3 Profile of the lecturer population

In terms of the lecturing staff in the social work department at UWC, they have a Master's degree in social work or related discipline such as psychology or sociology and must be registered with the SACSSP. In addition to this they have at least five years experience in the field of social work practice as well as research and publications in the area of social work. Lecturing experience and postgraduate student supervision is another requirement. Some lecturers attend social work conferences, present papers, are involved in research and produce publications on their teaching experiences.

3.7.4 Profile of field supervisor population

Thirty two social workers who were employed either at non government organizations, faith based organizations, community based organizations and Social Development district offices (government organizations) constitute the population of the field supervisors. They were both male and female. These have supervised UWC third year social work students from 2005 to 2008.

3.8 SAMPLING

Sampling is the decision and selection of object(s) or person(s) that the researcher wants to include (as participants) in the study that is representative of the population in or of which the research is done; not necessarily representative "in all aspects" but at least "limited to those characteristics that are relevant to the substantive interest of the study" (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:172). "A sampling unit is [an] element or set of elements that the researcher considers for selection in a particular stage of sampling" (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:174).

3.8.1 Students

Purposive sampling was the most appropriate sampling technique for selecting students to participate. Purposive sampling is chosen when the researcher chooses participants specifically because they are considered able to provide rich detail about the issue being studied. Therefore there must be clear identification and formulation of the criteria for the sampling units in the study (Strydom & Delport, 2005:329).

I was specifically searching for representative and differing data. Hence I purposefully and individually recruited and selected students who scored less than fifty nine percent (59%) average in the social work theory modules and less than fifty nine percent in the Intermediate Fieldwork module for participation in the study, amounting to sixteen students. My rationale was that they would be able to provide rich data relating to the issue at hand because an average mark (59%) and lower indicates that students are struggling to integrate theory and practice and meeting the expected learning outcomes. The student's average mark was based on lecturers' and field supervisors' assessment of these students.

Nine of the sixteen students agreed to participate in a focus groups session, forming an availability sample. In addition to this I recruited five students for individual interviews from the sixteen as they were not available on the day of the focus group session. I wanted to record their experiences as among them were some of the lowest scoring students. The first two students agreed to be interviewed together. The seven students, from UWC who I interviewed individually, were purposively selected because of their poor performance during the second semester in two theory modules as well as the Intermediate Fieldwork module.

The participants from NMMU were six third year social work students and one final year (third year) community work student. The common variable of participants in this sampling unit was that they all did an open course that

included students studying community work. This was convenient sampling (Creswell, 2007:127) as they were recruited by the Head of the Department (HOD) of Social Work at NMMU. Seven students volunteered to participate.

3.8.2 Lecturers

Purposive sampling was also employed for selecting eight lecturers teaching at undergraduate level in the Social Work Department at UWC because they all have firsthand knowledge of facilitating learning for integrating knowledge and theory. They were invited via e-mail. These participants have between two and six years experience in teaching UWC social work students.

3.8.3 Field supervisors

A purposive sample was drawn from the thirty two (32) field supervisors of third year students. The criteria for selection was those agency supervisors who have offered placement to UWC students from 2005 to 2008[5], who have terminated placements due to poor performance by students and/or those who have indicated concern about the lack of knowledge, skills and values from UWC students. These were recruited telephonically. Thirteen field supervisors volunteered to participate. Five field supervisors were interviewed individually; four in a group interview and four provided written responses to an open-ended guide. Three supervisors who were approached did not participate in the study due to time constraints. The thirteen field supervisors who participated have between one and six years experience in supervising UWC social work students.

3.9 METHODS AND PROCESSES OF DATA COLLECTION

According to Delport & Greeff (2002:171 & 291) the research methodology and design determines the methods and process for data collection. Hence a qualitative study is characterized by methods such as interviews, observations, documents

[5] This is the period during which I facilitated the role of fieldwork coordinator in the Social Work Department at UWC.

and audio – visual materials (Creswell, 2007:130). Three methods of data-collection i.e. individual interviews, focus group sessions and open-ended narrative guidelines were used in this research. Prior to data collection, consent was obtained from the participants. (Refer to Annexure B for an example of the participant consent form). I provided participants with the abstract and copies of the research question and objectives prior to conducting the interviews and disseminating the open-ended guide to lecturers and field supervisors.

From the outset of the study I planned to conduct focus group sessions with students at UWC and field supervisors (two groups) respectively, while requesting lecturers to individually respond to an open-ended narrative guideline. Some UWC students and field supervisors indicated that they would not be available on the dates that the focus group sessions were scheduled. Therefore I had to adjust the plan for data collection with regard to these two groups of participants. Consequently I interviewed some UWC students as well as field supervisors individually and conducted a focus group session with NMMU students.

I collected all the data myself. Creswell (2007:38) refers to the researcher as key instrument in this regard. While I was collecting the data I carried out preliminary analysis as suggested by Coffey & Atkinson (1996:2). This enabled me to make sense of the data and to review and restructure the questions for the focus groups and interviews to follow and to align them more productively with the research objectives. As recommended by Patton (2002:441), master copies of all data were stored in a locked cabinet in the social work department and on my computer. The different methods of data collection are discussed in the following paragraphs.

3.9.1 Individual interviews

I found the guidelines of Creswell (2007) most informative in preparing and conducting the interviews. The author indicated that interviews can be regarded as a sequence of steps during the data collection process. Firstly interviewees are categorized based on purposeful sampling then the researcher must decide on the

type of interview (face –to – face or focus group), whichever is practical and most useful in eliciting the information that is required. A decision must be made about the recording equipment and procedures to be used for data collection. This is followed by designing an interview schedule with a few open-ended questions and consideration for time allowed for adequate response to these questions. It is suggested that a pilot interview be conducted to refine or improve the questions and process for interviews to follow.

The researcher must decide on a venue to conduct the interviews that would be conducive and with no interruptions and distractions. Before starting the interview, participants must be briefed on the purpose of the study and sign a consent form for ethical reasons. The researcher should give the participants an indication of the duration for the interview; how the results will be used and offer them a copy of the report or the abstract. A good researcher should try to keep to the time agreed, be polite, considerate, respectful and not eager to offer advice or speak frequently (Creswell, 2007:132-134).

3.9.1.1 Individual interviews with UWC students

I conducted the first interview with one student to determine my plan for data collection and to develop relevant questions to use in the interviews to follow (Yin, 2003). This was convenient as I had frequent and easy access (Creswell, 2007:133) to students as a fieldwork coordinator in the social work department. I made use of Babbie & Mouton's (2001:289) 'basic individual interview" meaning that I did not go into the interview with a 'predetermined hypothesis-based' set of questions. I had a general idea of what I wanted to elicit but did not prepare a set of questions that had to be asked in a particular way. This was purposefully done because I wanted the participant in the pilot interview to share her experience in her own words, free of interruptions and to do most of the talking. Greeff (2005:292) refers to this as "a conversation with a purpose" to understand the significance people ascribe to their experience and allows the participant and researcher to explore the social issue. The same author warns that this type of

interview requires a plan and a procedure that is to be followed. Greeff suggests that the researcher set up questions and to have these assessed by more experienced researchers or participants before the actual interviews are conducted. In this research I set up questions and asked a colleague to review it before I conducted the interviews with the participants.

The interviews that followed were semi-structured based on the type of information that was elicited in the first interview. The use of the semi-structured interview allows for better insight into participants' challenges. Furthermore it is better suited if the social issue is of a personal nature as it allows for flexibility and the participant can introduce topics that the researcher may have omitted (Greeff, 2005:296), as in this research. (Refer to Annexure D for an example of the semi-structured interview schedule). I conducted individual interview sessions with the six students who indicated that they would not be available on the date that the focus group session were scheduled. As was done with the pilot interview these were conducted in my office in the social work department as it provided a quiet space with no interruptions as recommended by Creswell (2007:133). During the sessions I made rough notes and immediately after the sessions I typed up more comprehensive notes that were filed on my computer and a hard copy was filed in a locked cabinet in the social work department.

3.9.1.2 Individual interviews with field supervisors

I planned to have two focus group sessions with eight field supervisors respectively but due to time constraints this did not materialise. For both the individual as well as group sessions I conducted semi-structured interviews which are most commonly used in social science in qualitative research studies (Whittaker, 2009:34). Furthermore I wanted a structure that would facilitate data collection and analysis while at the same time providing flexibility to explore participants' responses in depth (Whittaker, 2009:34). (Refer to Annexure E for the interview schedule).

Greeff (2005:292) refers to Field & Morse (1995) with regard to guided interviews. I used this style of interviewing because I wanted to elicit specific information about a particular social issue in which the structure of the interview was known to me and the participant. This type of interview has a clear structure and includes a range of questions relating to challenges experienced by the participants. I recruited sixteen field supervisors, however only four responded. Hence this was not a focus group per sé but rather a group interview.

To start the session I introduced myself and thanked the respondents for their willingness to participate. I summarized the research topic and explained the issue of confidentiality and the purpose of recording the session. I proceeded by allowing time for participants to complete the participant information sheets. I did not discuss ground rules which are common practice when conducting interview sessions. This was an oversight on my part. I immediately proceeded with the warm up questions as referred to by Whittaker (2009:53).

The introductory question was: "Please introduce yourself and the agency where you placed at and or your affiliation with UWC as a campus or agency supervisor." These questions provided a context and ensured that "everyone made an initial statement and reduced the risk of groupthink" (Morgan, 1997 cited in Whittaker, 2009:53). This was followed by the key questions which directly address the research question. Hence most of the time was devoted to address these (Whittaker, 2009:53). I concluded the sessions by asking a closing question: "What do you bring to the supervisor-student relationship that enhances our students' learning?" This was the final question as referred to by Krueger & Casey (2000) as cited in Whittaker (2009:53-54). I summarized the discussion and asked whether participants wanted to make a final comment to what was previously said.

Immediately after conducting the group interview it was transcribed. I filed the copies of the transcribed group interview which were labeled "field supervisors". I stored a master copy in a locked cabinet in the social work department and saved the audio recording on my computer using the same title.

3.9.2 Focus group sessions

Focus groups are used when the researcher wants to obtain the group perspective on the issue being studied. Research (De Vos et al., 2005) shows that there are some criteria that are useful in conducting focus groups. Inclusive of these is that the researcher recruits more participants than the sample size in order for the session to continue even if some recruited respondents do not attend. The significance is in the group dynamics (Greeff, 2005: 299-303). Friendship pairs, "experts" or uncooperative respondents should be avoided as these can easily "highjack" the session by dominating the conversations. Similarly, smaller groups do not necessarily mean that the researcher has more control over the process although a bigger group requires a more skillful researcher who can balance participant involvement. Three or four groups for one topic are recommended, however more groups do not necessarily provide new insight. The number of groups depends on the diversity of the group and the ability of the researcher to separate distinctive individual uniqueness from the data (Babbie & Mouton: 2001:292).

3.9.2.1 Focus group sessions with UWC students

The focus group session was a good means of collecting a group perspective on participants' feelings, perceptions and experiences (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:291) about their challenges of theory and practice integration. I made use of open-ended questions as recommended by Blaikie (2000). This allowed participants the liberty to share what they were comfortable with and was not restrictive in terms of the information I wanted to collect.

The session was video and audio-recorded. The reason for both methods of recording was to ensure and secure that the information was recorded, should one of the equipment default. (Refer to Annexure F for the focus group guide). The topics for students included their personal challenges, as well as challenges experienced in terms of teaching strategies, techniques, assessment tasks, and the

use of supervision to facilitate theory and practice integration in fieldwork education. I chose to use case study examples to facilitate discussion.

The students were known to one other, so after I thanked them for their availability and explained the research purpose, I proceeded with the introductory question (Whittaker, 2009:53) which was: "What is the lecturing style that you prefer?" For most part of the focus group session respondents allowed equal and fair opportunity for individuals to participate. I concluded the session by summarizing some of the main points and asked a closing question in case participants wanted to make a final comment to what was previously said. After I transcribed the session I filed it according to a category, namely, UWC students. I also saved both recordings (video and audio) onto my computer using the same title.

3.9.2.2 Focus group session with NMMU students

The purpose of including this group as a sampling unit was to increase information and credibility of the study. The focus group session conducted with NMMU students was structured to answer the question that emerged for me after I transcribed the UWC sessions which was 'would students with the same academic background experience the same challenges of theory and practice integration?' I made use of open-ended questions as recommended (Creswell, 2007:130). The session was video recorded. Refer to Annexure G for the focus group guide). The topics for these students included their first formal and informal learning experiences and challenges experienced in terms of supervision to facilitate theory and practice integration in fieldwork. The schedule was somewhat different to that of the UWC group in that it included asking them about their first language and their first learning experiences to link it to my preliminary analysis of experiential learning and previous learning.

The students were known to one other so after I thanked them for their availability and explained the research purpose and disseminated the research objectives; I

proceeded with the introductory question (Whittaker, 2009:53) which was:" Introduce yourself and mention what is your home language". I wanted to know how many students are not English first language speakers as this was significant in the literature that students struggle to understand the language of learning and teaching (Van Rensburg & Lamberti, 2004:76). This question was followed by: "What was your first formal and informal learning experience." (Refer to Annexure G) This was asked to obtain an understanding of what students regard as learning (see Dykes, 2009).

Throughout the session respondents allowed equal and fair opportunity for individuals to participate. A student acted as scribe which assisted with writing up the transcription later. I concluded the session by summarizing the main points and asked a closing question in case participants wanted to make a final comment. After I transcribed the session I filed it according to a category, namely, NMMU students and saved the recording onto my computer using the same title.

3.9.3 Open-ended guide/ narratives

I made use of a guide with open-ended questions (Creswell, 2007:341) to enable lecturers and field supervisors to write down their experiences. This is a combination of an open-ended interview schedule and a guide for writing up experiences. Participants were expected to respond to a set of questions (Delport, 2005:174). Open-ended guides allow adequate responses to intricate issues in which participants are provided opportunity to respond in detail, are able to qualify and explain their feelings, beliefs or experience as well as allowing creativity and ability to articulate (Neuman & Krueger, 2003:273).

Lecturers in the social work department at UWC were requested to submit responses to the guidelines in the pigeonhole marked SHERNAAZ CARELSE[6] in the social work department at UWC. This was purposefully done in order to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Being a junior staff member wanting to

[6] This is my pigeonhole in the Social Work Department at UWC.

explore and describe (in a research study) their teaching strategies and techniques could have caused challenges in terms of power and authority dynamics in the collegial relationship. For this reason lecturers were not required to engage in focus groups or individual interviews. The topics for the open-ended guide were the same as those that were proposed for field supervisors. They included teaching strategies, techniques and methods that they use in order to integrate theory and practice which were related to class room teaching in particular. The typed responses were filed in a locked cabinet labeled lecturer one to four respectively.

Five field supervisors returned their responses via e-mail. (Refer to Annexure H for the open-ended semi-structured interview guide sent to field supervisors). The responses were filed electronically on my computer as well as hard copies which were locked in a filing cabinet in the Social Work Department, labeled, "e-responses from supervisor.

3.10 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Although the previous section described the data collection process of the study; the process of data collection, data analysis, interpretation of data and narrative report writing was at times conducted simultaneously as supported by Creswell. (1994:153). This is one of the significant differences between qualitative and quantitative analysis; in the latter the researcher waits for all the data to be collected before analysis can be conducted. While there is no customary procedure for qualitative analysis; this does not mean that it does not involve an organized and meticulous process (Tesch, 1990; Leedy, 2001).

Creswell (2007:163) mentions that the analysis of a case study involves a detailed description of the case itself. This was done in Section 3.6 of this chapter where the Intermediate Fieldwork module was described as well as some contextual background to UWC as an institution, the Social Work Department and the third year teaching programme of which the module forms part of.

In addition, Stake (1995) recommends four types of data analysis and interpretation in a case study approach. The first is categorical aggregation. This means that the researcher searches for a "collection of instances from the data" expecting that "issue-relevant meaning" will materialize. Secondly, direct interpretation takes place when the researcher examines a particular instance by describing and depicting it by "pulling the data apart and putting it back together again" in an attempt to illustrate its significance. Thirdly, the researcher ascertains patterns and search for association between categories. The final form is naturalistic generalizations in which the researcher forms generalizations that can be used and applied for himself/herself or other cases (Stake, 1995).

De Vos (2005:333) state that data analysis is the "process of bringing order, structure and meaning" to the data collected and qualitative data analysis in particular, as a search for generalised statements pertaining to relationships among categories of data.

The type of data analysis that I used is thematic analysis as described by Creswell (2007:244) which means I analyzed the data searching for specific themes by aggregating information into clusters and provided details that support the themes. I did not generalize beyond the case but made descriptions for understanding the complexity of the case. This links to direct interpretation (Creswell, 2007:245) in that I examined a particular instance (from the UWC participants and compared it to NMMU participants) by describing and depicting participants' experiences; "pulling the data apart and putting it back together again" in an attempt to illustrate the significance of the experiences.

According to Creswell (2007:172), in a case study approach there are codes for the context and description of the case as well as codes for themes that emerged from the unit of analysis and for the assertions and generalizations from the unit of analysis. Chapter One gave an in-depth background of the intermediate field work module as a practical module within the broader third year level of teaching. This analysis provided a description of the case while 3.6 above provided a

description of the population and the research setting to explain the context of the study. In section 3.8 above, the sampling units are explained.

The steps for qualitative data analysis as proposed by Tesch in Creswell (1994:155) were used for analysis of all the data collected from the different sampling units. Hence, step one entails getting a sense of the whole, meaning reading a transcript to get a sense of what it is about. After transcribing the interviews I read the transcripts several times to get a sense of what the interview was about. I numbered every line of the transcripts and typed responses in order to locate topics and themes easily when I develop them later. I made use of written notes in the margins about my thoughts and presumption about the content of the interviews to serve as memos (De Vos, 2005:337). (Refer to Annexure I, Text Box A (Individual interview with a field supervisor) for an example of what Babbie & Mouton (2001:415) refer to as edge –coding which are the margin notes on the right hand side of the document that contains codes.

As I read the transcripts and written responses I made use of the voice – centered relational method of data analysis because it is important to place yourself as researcher in a social and emotional context in relation to your respondents (Brown & Gilligan, 1992). I followed this process with all the transcripts. I read the transcribed interviews several times to locate myself in terms of background, history and experiences in relation to the respondents. This was done with all the participants but I think especially useful with students as I come from a vantage point of 'power' in terms of qualification, being the fieldwork coordinator and having taught a theory module in the social work department. Hence this process involved listening to my own emotional and intellectual responses when I engaged with the participants. I made use of a worksheet where I listed the participants' words in the one column and my own reactions and interpretations in the opposite column. This helped me to identify where and how my assumptions and views have influenced my interpretations of the respondents' narrative. This also assisted me in the documentation of the final report. I have elaborated on this in the Section 3.11.4 on reflexivity below.

Step two involves indicating underlying meaning from reading the transcripts. I selected one interview transcript from field supervisors'; the one I thought was the most interesting as the respondent made reference to "black" and "coloured" students throughout the interview session. I followed Tutty, Rothery & Grinnel's (1996:98) suggestion by not reading the whole document from beginning to end, but selected sections of the documents that I found interesting. Even having done so I found the transcripts extensive and felt impatient and disinterested at times because I felt that no new information came out.

I made notes asking questions and noting assumption to questions such as "what is this about?" and "what is the underlying meaning of what is being said?" I continued to write my thoughts in comment boxes on my computer. Annexure J, text box B is an extract of my impression and assumptions of the underlying meaning of one of the individual interviews with a field supervisor.

Step three relates to identifying possible topics. After reading through all the transcripts I made a list of all the topics. I did this in table format on my computer. I arranged the topics as major themes (coded yellow), categories (coded blue), sub-categories (coded green) and two unique topics (coded grey). Refer to Annexure K for the list of themes. Annexure K provides a detailed lay out of the themes which were colour coded. The grey codes are the unique themes or direct interpretations according to Creswell (2007:75) and were the sub-categories that were not present with all three sampling units. I collapsed most of the sub-themes to form new sub-themes which is presented in Chapter Four hereafter.

Step 4 involves the coding process. I abbreviated the codes I developed for the major themes, categories and sub-categories. I then typed the abbreviations next to the section in the transcripts where I identified the major themes, categories and sub-categories. I also used different colours to identify the different abbreviations more easily.

Step five constitutes developing themes. I selected themes that indicated patterns (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:412 & 213) as indicated in Annexure H. Step six entails abbreviation of themes/categories. In step seven I identified themes and sub-themes. As can be seen from the steps above this does not take place chronologically but requires going to and fro between these steps in the process of coding and analysis of the data. In the final step (eight) I recoded some data several times to make it more representative of the identified themes.

After I completed the whole process (all the steps) for qualitative data analysis as proposed by Tesch in Creswell (1994:155) I started documenting the findings which I compared and contrasted with relevant literature as presented in the next chapter. This also entailed verifying the data as is recorded in the following paragraphs below.

3.11 QUALITATIVE DATA VERIFICATION WITHIN THE CASE STUDY INQUIRY

According to Creswell (1998:201) qualitative data verification adds value to the study and entails a variety of procedures from which I have selected the following: a critique checklist, member checking, triangulation and reflexivity.

3.11.1 Critique checklist

I made use of a critique checklist, which according to Stake (1995, in Creswell, 1998:213) allows for checks and balances by experienced researchers. These were the colleagues in the social work department and my research supervisor. Stake (1995) in Creswell (2007:218-219) provides 20 criteria for a good case study report. I will mention some and integrate them with the criteria for evaluating a case study as proposed by Creswell (2007:219). The next pointers are a combination of Creswell's and Stake's description of a critique checklist. These authors assert that a good case study should consist of a detailed description of the case itself. This is found in Section 3.6 above where I provided a detailed

discussion on the Intermediate Fieldwork module and its links to the broader context of the social work third year programme.

In this research, the case of the Intermediate Fieldwork module is being used to study an issue which is the challenges experienced with regard to theory and practice integration. Themes are identified as illustrated in Annexure H. Furthermore I have used critical feedback (from participants in the study and colleagues) as well as triangulation to corroborate interpretations of the data. Chapter 4 provides a discussion of the assertions and generalizations induced from the case analysis. Finally, I have included a comprehensive reflection on my experiences and position in conducting this study.

3.11.2 Member checking

Member checking is the participants' review of the findings and interpretations made in the report (Creswell, 1998:203). The purpose is to check the credibility of the findings and interpretations (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner, & Streinmetz, 1991; Merriam, 1988). After doing some preliminary analysis I asked participants for feedback on the descriptions of the themes and whether there were any issues that I might have overlooked. Some participants who were asked to comment on the themes and my interpretation of the findings did not respond. It was exceptionally difficult to get the student participants' feedback as they were in the fourth year of study at this stage of my research and I did not want to impose on their time so I obtained limited UWC student checking of the preliminary findings and interpretations.

I intended to include NMMU students to compare whether the same themes would emerge however this inclusion also allowed for member checking by making use of a scribe while I conducted the session. I asked for clarity throughout the session as I was aware that I need to accurately record their input as I would not have contact with them again. Furthermore the purpose of the NMMU focus group was

to make generalizations to the wider student population as these findings would be useful to do so.

3.11.3 Triangulation of information

Triangulation is the use a variety of methods and means to elicit the type of information required (Creswell, 1998:213). I conducted interviews, focus groups, and reviewed students' as well as field supervisors' evaluation of the Intermediate Fieldwork in the induction of themes and sub-themes. I asked colleagues, participants and more experienced researchers to review the procedures I followed as recommended by Creswell (2007:45) for validity and credibility (Eisner, 1991 in Creswell (2007:204). Eisner developed three principles for credibility of qualitative research. These are structural corroboration, consensual validation and referential adequacy.

In terms of structural corroboration the researcher compares various forms of data to substantiate or oppose his/her interpretation of the findings. I searched for a flowing together of evidence that facilitated credibility and that would give me assurance about my observations, interpretations and conclusions (Eisner, 1991 in Creswell: 2007:204). The same author asserts that consensual validation is about the researcher seeking the view and judgment of other researchers, in this case my colleagues and supervisor, to examine my descriptions, interpretations and conclusions. The third principle is referential adequacy or criticism which is important for clarification and enlightenment of the issue being studied. Here one colleague in particular played a very important role in that she constantly challenged me about the themes, findings and my interpretation of the data and literature. Arising from these conversations was a need for me to reflect on my involvement in the study as discussed in the next section on reflexivity.

I reviewed student and field supervisors' evaluations of the Intermediate Fieldwork module as a means of triangulation. This intended to enlighten the themes that emerged from the preliminary data analysis.

3.11.4 Reflexivity

I used reflexivity as an additional method of trustworthiness by drawing on guidelines by Mays & Pope (2000) who have conducted studies relating to the quality of qualitative research and who have written extensively on reflexivity.

Reflexivity concerns the sensitivity in which the researcher approaches, processes and shapes the data collected (Patton, 2002:63 -66). In this study it relates to my prior knowledge and experience of teaching and supervising students from UWC's Social Work Department. I had to be aware of my personal and professional biases relating to the study and the findings. As a social worker, fieldwork coordinator, fieldwork supervisor and teacher of social work modules on third year level, my experience would influence the process and findings of the study. For this reason the type of questions I posed to participants (students, lecturers and fieldwork supervisors), my style of data collection and my interpretation of responses had to be carefully scrutinized by colleagues who were more experienced researchers. This awareness and reflection is regarded as personal reflexivity while epistemological reflexivity is about our reflections as researchers on our assumption about the world, and knowledge, that we have made in the course of the research and it helps us to think about implications of such assumptions (Willig, 2001:10).

I have engaged with, and been concerned about, the situation of challenges students experience with theory and practice integration for three years prior to undertaking the study. I was accordingly aware that I had to distance myself for fear of structuring the questions in a way that would illicit the information that I wanted or thought participants should provided.

I used reflective memos (Creswell, 2007:131 & 237) as a means of deepening the investigative process and to contextualise some of the thoughts and feelings I had about the interviews and responses and the content of the transcripts. I checked my own interpretations about what was said in the interviews and written

responses and reflected on my personal bias towards participants. A case in point was one particular participant who continually referred to the students along racial lines. This was particularly offensive to me but I did not ask the participant why she would refer to them in that way, instead I concluded that her interpretations were racist. In this regard reflexivity was useful as it necessitates awareness of the researcher's involvement in the construction of meanings during the research process, and conceding that it is impossible to remain 'outside of' the subject matter while conducting qualitative research. It urges us to explore the ways in which our involvement with a particular study influences, acts upon and informs our research (Nightingale & Cromby, 1999:228)

In this regard member checking and the use of the critique checklist played a major role. Colleagues and students who were involved as well as those uninvolved but experienced researchers, provided input which proved to be most valuable. The input by colleagues assisted in that questions were amplified to illicit the kind of information I wanted. Some of my interpretations of preliminary findings changed and prompted me to reconsider some of the first reported findings. This confirmed to me that the researcher always influences qualitative data in one way or another.

Wadsworth (1997) as cited in D' Cruz & Jones (2004) states that doing something new is often a reason for research, and the uncertainty of what should be done, motivates social workers in particular, to research these possibilities. Another reason for research relates to complaints about the way a profession is practiced or taught (D'Cruz & Jones 2004). Hence I had an awareness of my own contribution to the construction of the meanings throughout the research process, and acknowledge the fact that it is impossible to remain outside of the subject matter while conducting this research.

Due to my own involvement in teaching and learning at UWC, I was aware that I am not entirely objective in my involvement in this study. Therefore, no researcher can truly argue that personal experiences and or professional biases do

not impact and influence their studies, with our personal or professional interest in a subject matter. My awareness influenced how I interpreted the data. My previous knowledge and experience about this topic created my personal bias. Therefore I followed the methodological criteria as proposed by Babbie & Mouton (2001:13) for qualitative case study strategy so that this bias did not unduly influence and manipulated the data and outcomes of the study. I have used all the methods mentioned above to enhance trustworthiness of the interpretation of the data.

Drawing on literature by Creswell (2007), Patton (2002), and Babbie & Mouton (2001) I have explicitly described the case in section 3.6 above to ensure credibility. This research was done in a particular setting with a particular population group; therefore it will be problematic to make generalizations to other settings and populations. The findings are reflective of the subjects and inquiry itself as I tried to be as neutral as possible and remove my personal prejudices and biases regarding the challenges of integrating theory and practice as I have experienced it while facilitating learning in the social work department at UWC.

3.12 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

The study was conducted in specific setting with selected participants involved with the integrating of theory and practice on third year level. I developed themes and interpretations from the analysis of the data (Creswell, 1998:154) that the participants, the lecturers at the Social Work Department and the South African Council for Social Service Professionals may draw from in terms of challenges of teaching and learning as experienced in this setting. (Refer to Chapter Five Section 5.4). Qualitative research findings are however not meant for generalizations. The depth of the findings could have been enhanced if all lecturers teaching on third year level would have participated in the study. (Refer to Chapter Five Section 5.4).

3.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The following ethical guidelines were adhered to in the study:

- Permission to conduct the study was granted by the relevant Senate committee at UWC and the Head of the Social Work Department
- Written consent to participate in the research from lecturers, students and field supervisors was obtained
- Participant information sheets and consent letters were disseminated to all participants explaining the ethical considerations and guidelines for participation in the study
- Participation was voluntarily and participants were guaranteed anonymity in reporting and assurance that no private and personal information would be disclosed in the final research report
- Participants were informed that although I can guarantee confidentiality as far as the research report is concerned I could not guarantee the same in terms of the use of focus groups and the consequent limitations to privacy and confidentiality that might be breached by the participants themselves
- Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage of the process
- Student participants were assured that I was aware of power relations as I am the Intermediate Fieldwork coordinator. However, the power differential would not be used to manipulate or influence the student-teacher relationship or the data collected.

3.14 SUMMARY

This chapter described the rationale for the selected methodology and the process of data collection, analysis and verification. It also provided some reflection of my experience as researcher conducting this study and lastly the limitation and delimitations of the study.

A case study methodological approach or strategy was selected for this study which is not a methodological approach but rather a choice of what is being studied (Stake, 2005). While the focus of the study was not to compare and contrast the experiences of the NMMU and UWC students as a purpose of research design, the additional data collection intended to determine whether the same themes developed from the two groups of students with different fieldwork modules but the same requirements for the BSW degree.

The assistance of my colleagues, supervisor and participants in verifying and providing critical feedback encouraged authenticity of the findings.

The next chapter paragraphs the research findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4. INTRODUCTION

The aim of the study was to explore and describe the challenges experienced by third year social work students, field supervisors and lecturers with regard to theory and practice integration. Data were thematically analyzed according to the guidelines of Tesch (in Creswell, 1994:155). The themes were refined into categories and sub-categories of findings as illustrated in chapter 3. (See Table 3.C and 3.D as well as table 4.1; 4.2 and 4.3 below).

This chapter presents the data analysis and discussion of the findings. The discussion is structured according to the themes, categories and sub-categories of findings that emerged inductively from the analysis. I firstly report the findings from the student participants' experiences. Specific reference is made to the findings that emerged from the NMMU focus group where applicable. This is followed by the experiences of field supervisors and lastly by data from the lecturers involved in facilitating of learning on this level. I have included quotes which are in italics from the transcripts and extracts from the written responses after every sub-category to support the themes and categories. Relevant findings from published literature are compared to the findings of my study after the discussion of the findings of the sub-categories or categories where no subcategories exist. I summarised the common themes that emerged from the findings of the three sources in Chapter Five.

4.1 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS RELATING TO THE CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY THIRD YEAR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS WITH REGARD TO INTEGRATING THEORY AND PRACTICE

With regard to the students participants I obtained a group as well as an individual perspective. The value of focus groups is that "people create shared meaning through their interactions and those meanings become their reality" (Patton, 2002:12). I wanted to research the group's realities in terms of their experiences of challenges with regard to theory and practice integration in an attempt to form some generalizations among participants. Considering the uniqueness of human beings, some defining individual experiences are included as well. Therefore most of the themes that emerged were from the collective perspectives. However there were some direct interpretations which according to Creswell (2007:245) is when the researcher uses a case in point, drawing meaning from it without looking for other instances.

There was overall agreement from UWC as well as NMMU students with the problem formulation that there is indeed a huge gap between theory and practice, although the different groups were somewhat struggling to identify precisely how they experienced these challenges. The two quotes that follow are sentiments by participants from NMMU and UWC respectively that there is a gap between theory and practice.

What I experienced is that what they teach us at varsity is totally different to what happens in practice.

Sometimes what we doing is not what we do at the agency. For instance uh...when we here [at university] *we hear strength base approach, the values, principles and all those things, but when we get there* [social service agency] *we see the way they* [field supervisors] *communicate with clients. You tend to think that 'Ok maybe they* [field supervisor] *are not well trained; maybe I'm too much judgmental*

towards them'. But for me all the things I have learnt as from my perspective now are the people who are ... already on the field, they [field supervisor] *don't abide...They* [field supervisor] *don't use them. So either they* [field supervisor] *don't show it.*

Three main themes emerged with several categories and sub-categories as illustrated in Table 4.1 below.

TABLE 4.1: THEMES, CATEGORIES AND SUB-CATEGORIES OF FINDINGS OF STUDENT PARTICIPANTS' EXPERIENCES OF CHALLENGES RELATING TO THEORY AND PRACTICE INTEGRATION

4.1.1: First Theme: Facilitation of learning in the class room setting
4.1.1.1 Category: Teaching techniques 4.1.1.1 (a) *Sub-category*: Role plays and observations 4.1.1.1 (b) *Sub-category* :Group discussions and case studies 4.1.1.1 (c) *Sub-category*: Co-operative learning 4.1.1.2 Category: Structure of the third year programme 4.1.1.2 (a) *Sub-category*: Workload and time management 4.1.1.2 (b) *Sub-category*: Previous learning and scaffolding 4.1.2.1 (c) *Sub-category*: Language barriers
4.1.2 Second Theme: Facilitation of learning in the fieldwork setting
4.1.2.1 Category: Suitability of placements 4.1.2.1(a).*Sub-category*: Agency vs academic requirements/expectations 4.1.2.1 (b) *Sub- category*: Quality of field supervision
4.1.3 Third Theme: Personal challenges
4.1.3.1 Category: Access to prescribed books 4.1.3.2 Category: Emotional intelligence 4.1.3.3 Category: Time management

The discussion that follows is based on the themes and categories indicated in table 4.1.

4.1.1 FIRST THEME: FACILITATION OF LEARNING

Facilitation of learning for the purpose of this study refers to the teaching and learning activities that students and lecturers engage in during the process of developing knowledge and skills. The facilitation of learning in Higher Education involves the notion of communal inquiry. This means shared goals, concepts and discourse and "collaborative action" through which lecturers and students "share and negotiate understandings" (Gravett, 2004:30). Literature (Nicholls, 2002; Ramsden, 2003) indicates that the methods of teaching that facilitators use are particularly crucial to student learning at university level. These methods should be supported by a hypothesis of learning. However there is no prescribed model for teaching in higher education. Participants experienced the methods of teaching and the structure of the programme as imperative for facilitating learning because they found interactive methods good for integrating theory and practice. The first category describes participants' experiences of teaching methods employed by lecturers that are aimed at integrating theory and practice.

4.1.1.1 Category: Teaching techniques

In a study on research of pedagogy Hay, Kinchin & Lygo-Baker (2008) assert that although it is the student's responsibility to make learning meaningful it is the lecturer's responsibility to facilitate teaching methods that would encourage meaning making. When asked what lecturing style is preferred for facilitating the integration of theory and practice the following methods were highlighted.

4.1.1.1 (a) *Sub-category*: Role plays and observations

Role plays are the re-enactments of a case scenario by students or the facilitator of learning in order to transfer [theoretical] knowledge about a particular social issue

(Toseland & Rivas, 2001:120). Most participants perceived role plays as one of the most effective strategies to facilitate learning that promotes theory and practice integration. A strong group voice was heard (both from UWC and NMMU) about students having opportunity to practice by means of role plays/simulations and observations ("shadowing") before they go to "real life" situations. They sometimes have to deal with traumatic issues, like the rape of a child. They recounted that classroom instruction did not prepare them for intervention in such cases. The emotional and physical trauma of the child left them at "a loss", and they thought that observing role-models in practice and learning in classroom by role-plays would help in this regard. The following quotes summarize the sentiment:

I think every time we learn a new theory we can't click on immediately ... That's why the role-plays were useful because then you see what, what the theory really mean ...

You just do not have the knowledge of what to do when dealing with clients ....even ...Let me refer to me .....Not knowing anything ...I mean... You get confused...being given a child a ten year old child ....whose being raped it is another thing...You don't know where to start me I have to admit ... I was lost. I didn't even now even how to deal with the client and observing practitioners and having a chance to practice could help.

Some lecturers tried to bridge the gap by appropriate simulations. The following quotes illustrate:

With [mentions lecturer's name]... *we had role plays; we could integrate everything (meaning knowledge, skills and values) we had in the role plays. We could actually say and identify what we did. ...That's how we could identify the theory immediately more clearly.*

...because you can actually as you are in the field you can actually learn from them [meaning observing role-models] *how you can do it* [meaning working with clients in practice]. *You can also* practice *in role plays how to apply it.*

I think it is when you dealing with an emotional client ...you get books and the books would say: 'you do this' ... I think it would be better if you do a role play in class. And our lecturer would tell us that is how you would go about...

Ramsden (2003:111) indicates that making learning possible is about what students have to learn in relation to how it should be facilitated. The teacher will focus on the critical issues that present a barrier to learning. Therefore the content and barriers to learning determines the method of learning or instruction that will be facilitated. Bozalek (2009) states that most UWC students might have challenges with academic discourse related to poor academic backgrounds and therefore would need a particular way of learning.

Role-plays are effective when the learning outcomes are clearly understood and made explicit to students. Some students will withdraw and may not find this method useful. Therefore it is important to prepare students for the activity as well as debriefing them afterwards to ensure they understood and achieve the learning outcomes that were expected by this technique of facilitation of learning. The value of using this technique lies in the fact that students are able to reflect and make meaning of the concepts in a course and relate this to real world context (Barkley et al., 2005:155).

4.1.1.1 (b) *Sub-category*: Group discussions and case-studies

All the participants said that they prefer interactive or discussion style of lecturing as opposed to didactic style. They said that most lecturers use the discussion style of facilitation. This is facilitated either by dividing the class into smaller groups where each group discusses a topic (issue) and reports to the bigger group/class or in class discussion. To facilitate this type of learning, facilitators use case studies

which are demonstrations of a social issue/problem extracted from media articles, video examples or cases from facilitators' own practice experience.

Engelbrecht, (2001:155) indicates that case-studies are used to facilitate learning by doing an analysis of a social issue using literature and research to support arguments. These could include a newspaper article, video or an example of a social issue provided by the facilitator that students must discuss and apply theory knowledge to support their inputs.

Eli Bitzer (2004) suggests techniques in which group discussions can be facilitated which were also mentioned by students. The focus is on discussion pairs' written assignments, not necessarily for credit, but to organise student thinking and to take responsibility for their own learning. Another technique is question and answer pairs in which case students are paired and ask and answer questions relating to lecture content (Bitzer, 2004:58 – 59). Participants mentioned working in pairs but indicated that the tasks are not always aligned to the learning outcomes.

I think we are used to [mentions lecturer's name] *and his style of lectures. And he has interaction. He takes a break with an activity* [discuss a case study] *that actually forms part of the lecture... and remains in the topic.*

She [referring to a lecturer] *also does have group discussions and it also helped us to understand [*theory] *because at first we didn't understand what she was talking about...*

What students do not regard as helpful for integrating theory and practice is Power Point presentations as the following quote illustrates.

... [be]*cause what she is doing, she will organize all the slides né and then she will read the notes on the slides and not explain what does that mean.... So even in, in her slides you just read the slides but you don't know the words that you can*

understand. And she always uses abbreviations most of the time and she does not explain what that abbreviation mean.

And if you count ... it is about 33 slides ... and she will teach us that one day. That will be one lecture.

Gravett (2004:25) warns that a surface approach is inevitable when the facilitation of learning involves transmitting "large quantities of information" and when value is placed on the amount of work covered instead of the depth of the learning generated.

The group discussions and interactive style of lecturing that the participants referred to are techniques of collaborative learning and teaching. During such small group discussions and interaction, particular issues are analyzed, synthesized and evaluated. According to Barkley et al (2005:101) this style of facilitation is effective and well received (by students) in higher education in America. The authors suggest that this is so because it helps "students learn more deeply and remember longer by requiring them to connect what they hear and what they say to knowledge that they already possess".

In light of the findings of this research, it can be concluded that the techniques of facilitating teaching and learning were highlighted as a foremost concern for student participants in order to integrate theory and practice. This implies that students may need particular teaching techniques whereby theory and practice integration are facilitated, as recommended by Bozalek (2009). Collaborative learning techniques which are facilitated either by paired learning or group work (Barkley et al., 2005:4) seem to be preferred by all the participants as they are characterised by interaction between students as well as with the facilitator. The difference between collaborative and co-operative learning is in the goals of each. The goal of co-operative learning is to work together in a team as a means for scaffolding and is better suited for the facilitation of learning with children. Collaborative learning on the other hand is better suited for tertiary or adult

learners as the role of teacher becomes one of collegiality in that meaning constructed with students (Barkley et al., 2005:7).

Whittaker (2009:123) indicates that interactive styles of facilitating relate to Issue Based Learning (IBL). (Refer to Chapter Two Section 2.3.1.2 which explains that IBL promotes deep learning as opposed to surface learning and encourages critical thinking and analytical reasoning (Oko, 2008:94). McKeachie (2002:196 – 203) contends that people are motivated to solve problems and will acquire knowledge necessary for problem solving. Therefore providing them with a challenge (to solve a problem) is a useful strategy and opportunity to practice their thinking skills to reach higher order thinking.

It can be concluded that the techniques of facilitating learning coupled with how the module or teaching programme is structured are important in providing adequate opportunities for learners to succeed and grow. The next section presents the challenges relating to programme structuring at third year level.

4.1.1.1(c) *Sub-category*: Cooperative learning

Cooperative learning strategies and techniques facilitate the critical cross field outcome that relates to working in a group. Although participants reported positively on group discussions, they reported mixed feelings and experiences about assessment tasks and learning outcomes that involved group work and group learning for credit. Most of the participants highlighted challenges for working in groups such as: group members do not cooperate and work collaboratively and they do not have the opportunity to select the group members they prefer to work with. Participants said further that they did not benefit from this method of learning due to time constraints, cliques and personal challenges. A lack of adhering to group norms, like non- attendance or arriving late and leaving early from group meetings, hampered their progress. So they preferred working on their own as the next quotes indicate.

There were group cliques in the early uh whatever of the group. Some of the groups were very close that is why. Sometimes other group members enjoy working under pressure and others do not...
Some uh people uh m excuses were more acceptable than others ...you know...There were split groups ...

I don't mind working with anyone the problem is just like everyone's apology must be acceptable ...and just because you my friend it is acceptable. It should not be like that. Everyone's opinion should be acceptable.
They wouldn't attend. And at the end of the day we receive the same uh marks. Because everyone... I would say maybe half of the group didn't participate... But half of the group did do maybe the whole assignment, where as other have just they just had a little input for the assignment.

From participants' comments it can be concluded that students do not unconditionally prefer working in a group. Their reluctance is further exacerbated by the fact that they must work in teams as a critical cross field outcome (SAQA, 2003:5). In this regard cooperative learning as a method of facilitating learning was not always utilized effectively. In principle it should enable students to maximize their own learning (Bitzer, 2004:43); however some participants experience it as detrimental to their learning. Notwithstanding, the element of self-reflection, another learning outcome, was included in their evaluation of personal learning preference, as an advantage of the involvement with cooperative learning.

Cooperative learning is a teaching strategy that encourages students to work collaboratively in small learning groups in order to promote individual development (Barkley et al., 2005:5-6). It can be implemented as a strategy through whole class learning where class discussions are used and the facilitators can explore values, attitudes and knowledge of the students. Another method is paired learning in which mixed ability students are grouped but are assessed for individual and group development therefore placing responsibility for learning on

individual students while providing support (scaffolding). The third way is group work which is dividing the class in small groups. This strategy is focused on social interaction and completion of a task. Cooperative learning activities should be carefully planned in order to assess the individual as well as the group efforts (Barkley et al., 2005; Gravett & Geyser, 2004; Weimer, 2002).

4.1.1.2 Category: Structure of the third year programme

Ramsden (2003:119 – 120) asserts that we can use our understanding to improve university teaching by knowing what it is that we want students to learn and how these goals of learning can be communicated to students and teachers. The second assertion is that teaching is structured so that students have the best opportunities to learn what teachers intend them to conceptualize. The third assertion is to use methods of assessment that ensure that the students have learnt. The effectiveness of teaching is measured through a process of evaluating teaching and assessment strategies. Lastly how the aforementioned should be utilized to measure and improve the quality of tertiary education i.e. what methods of accountability and development are needed? All these in tern relate to the curriculum design and development. Hence the author concludes that "good teaching involves monitoring and improving the effectiveness of the curriculum, how it is taught and how students are assessed" Therefore overloading the curriculum is as ineffective as neglecting to look at students' prior learning experiences.

4.1.1.2 (a) *Sub-category*: Workload and time management

Gravett (2004:25) asserts that an excessive work load, an over- demanding programme and one in which students are frequently assessed for credit are all factors that promote a surface approach to learning.

Participants said that they could not manage the amount of work expected in the third year programme, meaning the assessment tasks for both theory modules as well as the fieldwork component. Most participants said that they did not like

working under pressure and that they felt that the second semester was far more stressful than the first semester, particularly with regard to the Intermediate Fieldwork module.

I think maybe we do not have enough time to write our reports. Maybe we only have one day to write our reports, [be]*cause this* [second] *term is a lot of work. So we submit our assignments late.*

It was hectic for me. I also think the time issue... The thing is we also have to go to our practical, and Monday or maybe Friday we go to the development youth programme. So it's also taking time.

Linked to the quotes above is the issue of content in a module (or learning programme). Weimer (2002:46) argues that the amount of content in a curriculum is a political one, meaning that the curriculum is constructed by policy makers and therefore facilitators do not necessarily have the liberty to reduce and remove content from a module. A study by Bozalek (2009) that was undertaken with fourth year social work students to have a module accredited, indicates that learning outcomes are pre-determined and standardised therefore learner driven knowledge and learner input into curriculum development is unlikely because they (learners) have to adhere to the outcomes prescribed and to timeframes predetermined by the university calendar.

In a learner-centered environment there is a dual function for content. The dual function is "a means and an end of instruction." (Weimer (2002:51). In other words, facilitators of learning can use content as a resource to develop learning skills as well as promoting self-awareness of learning. This will generate a more intricate and connected relation between content and learning. The following statement by Vella (2000:11) is therefore most appropriate: "A good teacher does not teach all that he knows. He teachers all that the learner needs to know at the time and all that the learner can accountably learn in the time given." Therefore learning that generates a deep approach is characterized by an emphasis on the

most important concepts in a module, the facilitator drawing connections between these concepts and emphasizing the depth of learning (Hay et al., 2008). Hence, the workload and the management thereof should be aligned in order to achieve learning outcomes and learning should be facilitated by building on previous learning (Gravett, 2004:25).

4.1.1.2 (b) *Sub-category*: Previous learning and scaffolding

Gravett quotes Ausubel (Gravett, 2004:37) that learning happens in relation to previous learning. This occurs when previous learning is used as a scaffold for learning new knowledge (Hay et al., 2008). Scaffolding is a process in which students are given support until they can apply new skills and strategies independently (Rosenshine & Meister, 1992).

Most participants from both NMMU and UWC said that learning in previous modules was not adequate to give them the confidence for intervention with families, children and marginalized groups. In their experience the theory knowledge sometimes only came after the fieldwork assignments and assessments were completed.

Sometimes the theory comes after we have done the tasks in the field.

I think maybe in second year maybe if they can introduce the casework in there ... it will prepare the second year students for the third year. I would suggest that in second year the students they must have clients just to have the knowledge... [Meaning to have experience and exposure to working with clients]

I think [mentions lecturer's name] [mentions the module] *should not be on Thursdays. It should be on Tuesdays because .... For instance if you are going to do a needs assessment, for instance on Thursdays she will talk about needs assessment of which we already doing that. So you don't know what to do because you haven't done the theory.*

I think maybe in second year maybe if they can introduce the casework in there it will ... it will prepare the second year students for the third year. Because with me it ... when I [first] *visited the agency and was told to work with four clients it was a bit of a surprise and uh ...uh...and anxiety came out. Because in second year I didn't like have a taste of that.*

Apart from feeling overwhelmed with the amount of work for this particular module, participants said that often the practice experience preceded the theory input. This links to assertions by supporters of OBE that the education system is rigid in its adherence to timeframes. In terms of OBE the learner should not be restricted by time to meet outcomes. The OBE model therefore advocates learners having several opportunities to be assessed in order to achieve the learning outcomes. This is referred to as expanded opportunity (Spady 1994a:11-20; Spady & Marshall 1991:67).

From participants' responses it is evident that they want to see the links between the current learning and their learning in previous modules. This is related to experiential learning that is the learning from one's lived experiences (Amstutz, 1999:24) which is discussed in Chapter One Section 2.4.1.1.

4.1.2 SECOND THEME: FACILITATION OF LEARNING IN THE FIELDWORK SETTING

Studies by Oko (2008), Morgan (2006), Koh (2002) and Spouse (2001) suggest that theory and practice should be interlinked. They assert that professional development and facilitation of learning occurs in practice–based learning and according to Morgan (2006) integration of theory occurs when theory is consulted during the process of learning clinical skills.

The NMMU focus group was primarily focused on exploring challenges experienced in the fieldwork setting. As indicated previously, the supervision programme is different to that of UWC in that academic staff (NMMU) is also

responsible for campus supervision unlike UWC where campus supervision is facilitated by social workers who are employed by the University on a contract basis. Therefore the experiences of both participant groups regarding integrating theory in the practice setting were explored to compare these and to enrich the data. Despite the programme being different both UWC and NMMU participants' experiences of fieldwork placements for the integration of theory and practice revealed two predominant categories, i.e. issues related to the suitability of placements and student supervision.

4.1.2.1 Category: Suitability of placements

In Chapter One, Section 1.4.3 (b) the requirements of the fieldwork placement of students were discussed. They specify that students are placed at a social services agency one day a week for the duration of the academic year (February to October). This expectation is the same for NMMU students. Referring to Chapter Two, Table 2.7, the role of field supervisors is to provide educational, supportive and administrative supervision to social workers, student social workers and social auxiliary workers (Suraj-Narayan, 2010:189).

Participants experienced that some field supervisors are not adequately briefed on students' academic requirements and responsibilities and the organizations also are not administratively prepared for accommodating students. They mentioned that adequate orientation of field supervisors is not carried out and that this inadequacy contributes to the challenges they experience with regard to these supervisors not understanding the requirements of integration of theory in the practice placement. The following quote summarizes the emerging sub-categories.

I don't know if our agency supervisors know what is expected of you [students], *because I experienced ....problems.... I think if maybe the coordinator* [referring to campus co-coordinator] *and the supervisors get together and talk about what the expectations from you are from them. I think before being placed, before the*

students are placed to the agency ...the supervisors ... have to go to the agency first and see if it suitable.

Like last semester we only had one [meaning client]. *And we told the supervisor we had to have four when we were making our contract. We told him that we... we need to have four and then he agreed that he was going to make sure that we have. But even that semester we also told him that we need to have two. He always promises that we will get clients but he doesn't speak to the receptionist who gets clients to give us clients. So that is a problem.*

Nzira & Williams (2008:158-159) emphasize the importance of students being placed at suitable organizations for fieldwork practice. That means that the organization's framework for practice must be in line with what is required by the learning institution. The following sub-categories of findings emerged:

4.1.2.1 (a) *Sub-category*: Agency vs. academic requirements/expectations

Nzira & Williams (2008:158-159) urge that learning institutions should make sure that theory frameworks taught are practiced by organizations where students are placed, in order to have assurance that students would have opportunities to practice knowledge and skills in the fieldwork setting.

Participants from UWC as well as those at NMMU said that the academic requirements are different from that which is expected at the agency. They said that it seemed as if supervisors are not familiar with the ELOs, the theoretical approaches, particularly the strengths-based approach and agencies focus on one or two levels of intervention (micro, mezzo and macro). In their experience some of the agencies are more macro focused in terms of their community intervention policy. Hence participants did not have adequate opportunity to develop skills on micro and mezzo levels.

Sometimes what we doing is not what we do at the agency. For instance uh...when we hear strengths-based approach, the values, principles and all those things, but when we get there we see the way they communicate with clients. You tend to think that 'Ok maybe they are not well trained; maybe I'm too much judgmental towards them'. But for me all the things I have learnt as from my perspective now are the people who are ... who are already on the field, they don't abide ... .they don't use them. So either....they don't show it...

My agency was more concentrating on community work....than micro... working with clients...

Now there was a question from the social worker: 'Why are you writing this when I have written this or that?' .....So I was a bit confused and surprised. I think they underestimate our reports or us. ....When they read our reports they see that now ok it is written by a student. They take it for granted that it is written by a student. Not knowing what you've written there is what you... what the client has said. So I was a bit confused.

I had to ask a quick question and he said 'Do this, this and that'... and that is all. When I come here at school and say I done this and that; my supervisor would say that's not it. So it's really confusing us.

Participants experienced agencies not providing them with the opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes as expected from the practice guideline. In addition, unsuitable field placements and the different requirements by the agency (supervisor) caused much frustration with the participants. The most significant of these frustrations seemed to be that agencies do not practice from the same theoretical framework as that which is taught at the university. So students leave agencies without practice experience in implementing interventions based on these theories and thus are not able to meet the learning outcomes.

Student supervision is a requirement by the SACSSP. In this regard contracts between the university and organizations (field supervisors) should be formalized

(Botha, 2000:308). Therefore the conditions for the collaboration must be clearly stipulated in the contract as well as the consequences if conditions are not met. Furthermore literature emphasises the importance of supervision of students in the field as critical to their professional and academic development (Nzira & Williams 2008:158-159). Hawkins & Shohet (2000:63), maintain that contracts between supervisor and supervisee should include ground rules, responsibilities, boundaries, accountability and expectations in the supervisory relationship, hence the next sub-category.

4.1.2.1 (b) *Sub-category*: Quality of field supervision

Botha (2000:11) asserts that supervision is a process of learning in the context of mutual relationship between supervisor and supervisee with the goal being that of transferring knowledge, skills and insight into clients' systems circumstances.

Most participants from both UWC and NMMU felt that field supervisors are not skilled in providing supervision as they do not comply with the academic requirements. The concerns were unavailable supervisors, supervisors not familiar with the theories and supervisors not understanding the academic assessment process and the ELOs assessment criteria. Some participants were placed at agencies where the social workers were based at a different office and therefore not readily available to supervise them which presented a lot of challenges in terms of academic development pertaining to skills and knowledge acquisition.

The following quotes illustrate some of the frustrations:

We had a meeting with our supervisor; right ... We were talking about the ELOs. She actually told us that she does not understand the ELOs; what they require. And then she like told us to consult [the fieldwork coordinator] *and really ask because it is written in such a way that they are not understandable.*

There were no social workers at all. We were not sure whether we were coming or going. So the only thing we had to do was to ask advice from the auxiliary social worker and at the end of the day she was not our supervisor and the things that she is telling was contradicting to what our supervisor want us to do.

The child was abused and I didn't know what to do then. So I went to class and I asked advice from other students and the supervisor. So that is what they told me what to do. So going back to our theory class that is what they advised me to do.

According to both UWC and NMMU participants, the lack of support and cooperation resulted in them not being assigned clients and a macro project. They felt that supervisors are not adequately briefed in terms of their (supervisors) role and students' responsibilities. Both UWC and NMMU participants said that field supervisors do not understand the exit level outcomes and therefore could not adequately assess them. According to UWC participants, field supervisors said that the ELO were difficult to understand because of the way they are written. Furthermore it was said that field supervisors do not know what students are supposed to do nor are they acquainted with the outline of reports that are to be written. Participants felt underestimated by social workers in the field. Participants' perceptions are that field supervisors do not understand assessment criteria and therefore were not able to provide adequate guidance to them.

The following quotes illustrate some of the issues:

Each time just to get her trying to... to ask and beg for a client. And later on I didn't actually know anymore what to do.

I can't see how a student can fail fieldwork if supervision ...Isn't [aren't] *they suppose to guide you and rectify people...?*

Other issues relate to suitability of the placement in terms of practice framework and orientation of students and supervisors before the placement commences.

I think that there is a big difference between theory and practice. Huge. Everything doesn't happen according to the text book. And it's more theory. And I feel limited.

The question that arises is whether supervisors are overwhelmed with their own work loads and do not have adequate time to supervise students or whether they regard the academic expectations as "not from the real world" as a supervisor indeed mentioned to a student.

I have actually experienced that; asking for guidance for ... for one of my cases and the answer ... the reply that I got was : 'In the real world it would have been better if you could have done 'this'...but we can't do 'this' now. We need to do that. And it was a quick fix for ... quick fixes of just letting the child go. Actually no interaction. No work with the child because time is limited.

We don't always have supervision at the agency.

We are struggling with field instructors that don't supervise us or they not at work for three months and you can't ...and then they off sick. Then you're lost.

It can be concluded that if suitability of placements, students' preparation, learning contracts, supervision, assessment and evaluation of placements are not in line with academic requirements, barriers to students' acquisition of knowledge, skills and values are erected. A suitable placement therefore will provide students with the opportunity to enhance learning. As indicated in Chapter Two, Section 2.5 of this report, supervision is an integral part of the professional academic development of students. All three interrelated aspects, i.e.-educational, administrative and supportive supervision are equally important to help students with the challenges of integrating theory and practice. I concur with Nzira & Williams (2008:156) that student supervision is important for student development and requires careful planning. Supportive supervision in particular

should address the student's personal challenges with regard to theory and practice integration; which is the next theme.

The major challenges that NMMU participants shared with UWC participants is the poor quality of supervision in that field supervisor did not have time to adequately guide them due to their own workloads and the fact that the theory frameworks in the fieldwork setting were different to that taught at university. Another crucial and strongly reiterated dynamic is that they did not experience field supervisors as good role models. In the entire population there was only one student who held her supervisor in high esteem as a good role model, providing supportive and being knowledgeable.

Agency demands and limited time to assist students were identified as impediments to integrating theory and practice (Dettlaff & Wallace, 2002). In this regard, Hawkins & Shohet (2000:118) provide guidelines in terms of supervisory responsibilities. The authors regard developing self awareness, openness to feedback and monitoring effective supervision as the supervisee (student's) responsibility. The supervisor in turn is responsible for creating an environment for reciprocal feedback, assisting with exploration and thinking, addressing unsafe and incompetent practice and sharing skills and experiences (Nzira & Williams, 2008:167).

4.1.2.1 (c) *Sub-category*: Language barriers

One of the NMMU student said that she was placed at an agency where she was unable to speak the language of the clients. She had to rely on a fellow student to accompany her on interviews in order to conduct interviews with the client. She felt that this limited her learning experience as language was a barrier in the communication and therefore impeded her learning.

This is what Creswell (2007:245) refers to as direct interpretation as it relates to one participant's experience and I have not looked for more instances but felt it

was important to raise this issue as it relates to learning outcomes. How is the student to meet the learning outcome if she is not able to communicate with the client on a meaningful level? It relates to suitability of placements and ELO 1 that relates to building professional relationships.

Including NMMU participants enriched this study in the sense that they confirmed that the challenges that UWC students experienced with integrating theory and practice is not unique. Both groups have the same challenges regarding agency supervisors not being familiar with the ELOs and the theory frameworks taught at the university. From a programme structure and management point of view it would appear that UWC students have more learning support on campus than NMMU students, however both experienced the same challenges with regard to fieldwork placement and supervision. UWC students have the advantage of their campus supervision being mostly in individual sessions and in pairs (refer to Chapter One Section 1.4.3 (c). Therefore the focus is on meeting their individual learning needs, whereas the NMMU students mostly have group supervision with their campus supervisor and individual supervision with agency supervisors, which are not on a regular basis.

4.1.3 THEME THREE: PERSONAL CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY STUDENTS THAT AFFECT THE INTEGRATION OF THEORY AND PRACTICE.

The lack of access to basic resources such as prescribed books impacts on student learning and is linked to this study in particular. Most students said that they do not purchase books but make copies and do not keep these copies after the assignment, test or exam are done. Hence a strategic approach to learning is adopted, in place of the deep learning which the integration of theory and practice requires.

4.1.3.1 Category: Access to prescribed books

Most participants said that they cannot afford to purchase the prescribed books as their scholarship is insufficient or they do not receive any financial assistance. They especially referred to the cost of books.

I will be honest. We don't buy the books. We used to make copies. That's what we do as social work students. You find if you want to do an assignment now you make copies for that particular assignment and you throw those copies away. You don't go back and read. That's why....it's not ...We don't read them again. We make copies for the assignment and put the copies aside. We don't go back to them. But if it was a book, you know ok that is a book and I have to go and get something from that book, but copies like any other paper you just look at them and put them away.

And then I had to buy stationery as well as text books. I must say I do have text books but I don't have enough text books.

Especially the book allowance. It must be more. Because some of the books you don't buy, because social work books really are expensive.

In a study by Schenck (2009) conducted in the social work department at UNISA, students struggled financially and this was given as the reason for the institution's high drop-out rate. Similarly, participants in the present research are struggling with financial challenges. This impacted on their learning efforts and outcomes because they could not afford books. It seems as if they experienced that this impacted on the quality of work they produced and thus the integration of theory and practice. Another study by Breier (2010) revealed that most students at UWC come from low socio-economic backgrounds and are therefore dependent on scholarships and bursaries (Breier, 2010). This situation is not unique to UWC as Earl (2008) quoted by Schenck (2009) indicated similar conditions exist for students at Stellenbosch University and the University of Limpopo.

4.1.3.2 Category: Emotional intelligence

Butler (2010:46) cites that emotions have often been considered as hampering rationality when in fact "reason and emotion are complementary … states of awareness."

One participant from the UWC group and another from the NMMU group mentioned feeling overwhelmed by some of the cases they were assigned. The following is what they had to say about their engagement with clients who experienced trauma.

The client was just crying and we didn't know what to do...I am only human...

When it was my first time in the agency ...Not knowing anything ...I mean... You get confused...being given a child a ten year old child ....whose being raped it is another thing...You don't know where to start.

Although these were only two of the twenty two students I have interviewed, it was significant in the sense that these students felt that they did not have the emotionally maturity for the type of cases that they will engage with. However in terms of self-awareness they could reflect on the experience which therefore acknowledging their feelings (challenges) as they realized the responsibility for responsiveness they should possess.

Race & Pickford (2007:10) provide suggestions by Mortiboys (2005) that the facilitator (in this case the supervisor or fieldwork coordinator) expects, plans and deals with the human dimensions of teaching which the authors regard as equally important as mastering the subject or the design of facilitation resources and the teaching techniques. Therefore debriefing students during supervision sessions by way of reflection becomes an important part of their academic development as well as developing emotional intelligence.

The UWC student was a male and I speculated whether his 'hesitance' was related to gender difference (the client was a girl child). Smethurst (2010:101) states that students could be reluctant to reflect on gender sensitive issues, but asserts that such reflection is necessary to explore the emotional impact social work has on you as a student and how your gender affects your responses to traumatic situations. Hence, recognising the support that such students may need.

4.1.3.3 Category: Time management

Both groups of students mentioned that they struggle to manage their time effectively to meet all academic requirements. They attributed this to the structure of the fieldwork programme. They struggled to manage the assessment tasks because there was not enough time allotted for successful completion of tasks as well as the point made above that practice precedes the theory input by lecturers. (Refer to Chapter One Section 1.4.1 where the structure of the fieldwork is explained).

... a lack of time cause you are given a file that is due in four weeks time and you got to rush through it. And you got to ... go alone ... you don't have time.

It is not clear whether students are struggling with academic demands because of a lack of work ethic, poor time management or the demanding workload (content). It is not clear whether this issue relates to the type of student (previously disadvantaged and poor schooling background) that UWC accommodates, although the same issue was raised by NMMU students as well.

4.2 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS RELATING TO FIELD SUPERVISORS' EXPERIENCES OF CHALLENGES FOR FACILITATING INTEGRATION OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

Two main themes were identified in the field supervisors' data, with several categories and sub-categories as illustrated below.

TABLE 4.2 THEMES, CATEGORIES AND SUB-CATEGORIES OF FINDINGS OF FIELD SUPERVISORS' EXPERIENCES OF CHALLENGES RELATING TO THEORY AND PRACTICE INTEGRATION

4.2.1: First Theme: Supervision
4.2.1.1 Category: Suitability of placements 4.2.1.1 (a) *Sub-category*: Theoretical frameworks of organization vs the social work department 4.2.1.1 (b) *Sub-category*: Supervisor knowledge base 4.2.1.2 Category: Collaboration between fieldwork coordinator and field supervisors
4.2.2 Second Theme: Students' personal challenges
4.2.2.1 Category: Time management

4.2.1 FIRST THEME: SUPERVISION

Social work supervision according to Suraj-Narayan (2010:190 - 192) is concerned with the development of the supervisee's knowledge, skills and attitudes for effective service delivery at micro, mezzo and macro levels and is therefore "an enabling process" (p.191). The supervisee develops competencies by "doing the work and learning the skills and techniques required doing so" (p.192). In other words learning by doing; also referred to as experiential learning.

For the purpose of student fieldwork practice, the Social Work Department has arrangements to place students with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the Department of Social Development. (See Chapter One, Section 1.4.4). Field supervisors were in agreement with students that a major challenge for the integration of theory and practice was the mismatch between the philosophies and theoretical guidelines taught at the academic departments and the practice orientation. This complicates the supervision of students in the field.

4.2.1.1 Category: Suitability of placements

A placement is regarded suitable if the theory framework taught at the university is followed by the organization and the supervisor has sound knowledge, skills and values to develop students as competent practitioners (Nzira & Williams, 2008).

The following discussion indicates that the theoretical orientation of most organizations and the knowledge base of some supervisors do not match the expectation of the training institution.

4.2.1.1 (a) *Sub-category:* Theory frameworks of organizations vs. the social work department

Participants perceived that most agencies where students are placed are not familiar with the new theories that students are taught at university. The following quotes illustrate:

Uhm many agencies don't work strength-based ... They still working ... old school and its uh ... many of them are not working strength base ... and I think if you are placing students at a agency where they not working strength base uhm you going to have students who don't know what they doing... So... for future for any student make sure that they have at least started with strength base and that they partner with that organisation that have worked with these students.

Die akademiese ouens, sê ek sommer is skelm. Want dit is maklik om al die grand woorde uit 'n boek uit te haal. En as ek nou net spesifiek net vir [mentions student's name] *kan vat....As ek nou dink, jy weet, haar plakaat en als dit was nie so nice grand nie, maar ek bedoel....Die ander een het meer punte gekry as sy , maar sy moes 'n groter effort aanwerk...aanwend.*

Translated: *The students who are academically strong, I say are dishonest, because it is easy to take all that grand words out of a book. If I think specifically of one student* [mentions student's name]. *If I think about it her poster and everything was not so nice and grand, but I mean ...The other one got more marks than her, but she put in more effort.*

A number of questions occurred to me in terms of supervisors' perception of students. It would appear from the last comment in particular that the supervisor is not familiar with the new theoretical concepts as she refers to it as *grand words out of a book.* Furthermore she regarded students who are academically strong as not necessarily doing well in the fieldwork. This raised another concern for me about her understanding of the assessment criteria and her knowledge of assessment in the context of ELOs.

The implication is that if supervisors are not familiar with theoretical frameworks taught they will not able to guide the student with the integration of theory and practice. It is for this reason that Nzira and Williams (2008:156-172) alert us that fieldwork placements should be suited for academic development and that evaluations of such placement is crucial to determine placement effectiveness.

4.2.1.1 (b) *Sub-category*: Supervisor knowledge base

According to Rautenbach & Chiba (2010) social workers globally share a common theoretical and knowledge base (p.12) and in the South African context it is imperative that social workers and therefore student social workers "are well grounded … with practice knowledge, understanding and skills in a variety of

settings" (p.23). Participants shared concerns about their own ability to supervise students. They said that they are challenged by the new theories because they are not familiar with the theories that students are taught. Furthermore they must constantly familiarize themselves with the new theories introduced by the lecturers and rely on students for the theory notes as these are not always provided by the social work department. Some participants said that they access literature on the theory approaches at their own cost to read up on the theories students are taught. The following quotes illustrate the general views:

I think for me ... my greatest challenge is the theory [be]*cause I've never done it. The theories change every time. I also felt challenged in that way in that I wasn't on par with the new information ... the new uhm assessment tools, the approaches and models.*

As a agency supervisor you have to read because you wonder will I be able to supervise this student properly ... in terms of getting not just the student's academic requirements but also fieldwork.

The other thing is this having agency supervisors that don't have a social work background can also cause problems for the students in terms of supervision. It is unfair towards the students if we assess them using the same forms as the lecturers. We can give an overview of how they applied the theory but we are not aware of what they do in class and find the current system somewhat inappropriate.

In terms of the SACSSP code of ethics for education and training only professional social workers may supervise social work students (SACSSP, 2003) and the assumption is that supervisors are well grounded in the knowledge and skills required for supervision (Rautenbach and Chiba in Nicolas et al., 2010:23). This is aligned with the SACSSP code of conduct that social workers are to keep abreast with developments and research relating to the profession (SACSSP, 2003).

4.2.1.2 Category: Collaboration between fieldwork coordinator and field supervisors

Participants said that they are not informed about what is being taught in the lectures. They expressed that they would like to have knowledge about theory and what is happening in class to better assist the students in the application of theory. Their voices are summarized in the following quotes:

Somehow I would like to be more informed about what is happening in their class.

I have thought throughout the year if only if I had some copies of what they are doing in advance it would assist me. And I would have been able to assist them [students] *better.*

It can be concluded that participants often relied on students to guide them in terms of the theory that needed to be integrated in the fieldwork practice. This was a dilemma because students by their own account themselves struggled to understand the theories they had been taught. Field supervisors in this research did not feel adequately able to aid student's development because of the challenges relating to their own knowledge base. They relied on students to guide them in terms of the theory and programme details. Some field supervisors were also not provided with course outlines of the Intermediate Fieldwork programme and had to rely on copies from the students.

Challenges experienced by participants relating to insufficient collaboration between the social work department and the organizations clearly compromised the quality of supervision for integrating theory and practice. Participants also commented on some of the personal challenges that students experienced that influenced the quality of supervision and their commitment to their practical assignments. For effective integration of theory and practice there needs to be collaboration between training institutions and organizations where students are

placed (Nzira & Williams, 2008) i.e. between field coordinators and field supervisors.

For practice education to be effective it is essential that all role players work collaboratively in the best interest of student academic progress at the same time serving vulnerable people (Nzira & Williams, 2008).

I concur with Nzira & Williams (2008) that student success depends largely on the collaboration between facilitators of learning. All the participants in this research have identified this as a challenge. Hence the need to address this issue is a collective responsibility of all the role players. Referring to Weimer (2002:99), students will take greater responsibility for their learning if policies are learner – centered. By their own admission, field supervisors are also learners in this case. We can conclude that students and field supervisors have not provided much input in the development of the Intermediate Fieldwork programme.

4.2.2 SECOND THEME: STUDENTS' PERSONAL CHALLENGES

As a historically black university, UWC continues to draw most of its students from the marginalized groups which are associated with poor academic backgrounds that do not prepare them adequately for tertiary education (Breier, 2010). Participants in Breier's (2010) study said that some students at UWC were more resilient, focused and motivated due to their upbringing and manage to make a success of their tertiary education. I concur with Breier that for a lot of students in the social work department, managing tertiary demands would not be achievable if they did not have the support and motivation.

4.2.2.1 Category: Time management

One of the critical cross field outcomes of the BSW is the students' ability to manage his/her time effectively. In Chapter Two Section 3.2.1, Table 2.2., mention was made that time should be used as a resource and not a restrictive

measure in the OBE context. However both student and field supervisor participants said that students struggled to manage time effectively.

All field supervisor participants said that students struggled to manage their time effectively. This impacted submission of reports and caused absenteeism and a general lack of commitment to the placement. Some participants had empathy with the students as they felt that the students have genuine challenges in terms of time management with their full academic programme. They thought that students felt overwhelmed by deadlines and the demands of the academic programme in general. However some participants said that the nature of tertiary education is that it is demanding and that some students use this feeling of being overwhelmed as an excuse not to produce their work.

En dan wat miskien maar net die verslae. Nou nie die indiening nie. Daai ander verslae dink ek was maar hoekal[mentions student's name] s'n moet ek vir jou sê. Ek het op die heel laaste dag, het ek 'n klomp gekry. Dit was maar altyd die computer het nie gewerk nie of die stiff...sticky of 'n die of 'n daai. So ek dink sy het miskien by julle betyds ingegee maar ek het verskriklik gesukkel om daai verslae by hulle te kry.

Translated: "And then the reports, not the submission. Those other reports I think were also (mentions student's name) I must say. I received a whole lot on the last day of the placement. The excuse was always that there were problems with the computer. So I think she may have submitted on time to you but I struggled enormously to get the reports from them.

Ek kry die kinders so jammer. Dan is dit die taxi en dan moet hulle dit doen en hulle moet dat dit. Dis 'n hele opwerkery ....So it's difficult. That I appreciate.

Translated: I felt so sorry for these kids. If it was not the taxi's it was this or that they needed to get done. It is so anxiety provoking. So it is difficult. That I appreciate"

They [the students] *really stressed out. They are writing a test on Monday or Thursday and on Wednesday they are at the agency and they thinking of this and only half way finish. It's that emotional ....Sometimes they just well, confuse.*

The issue of time management could possibly be linked to an overload as well as the structure of the module and or the entire programme (BSWIII). This relationship is relevant to the facilitators and developers of the programme which constituted the next category of participants, namely the lecturers teaching in the social work department at UWC. The issue of time management was mentioned by both student and field supervisors. This relates to the structure of the academic programme, specifically the purpose of assessment. In a programme of study where the curriculum is overloaded it is natural for students to adopt a surface approach to learning. The quotes above explain/illustrate the students' situation of workload pressure.

4.3 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS RELATING TO THE CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY LECTURERS WITH INTEGRATION OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

Two major themes were identified in the analysis of the narratives of the participating lecturers. These were facilitation of learning and students' academic background as challenges that resulted in a lack of theory and practice integration.

TABLE: 4.3 THEMES, CATEGORIES AND SUB-CATEGORIES OF FINDINGS RELATING TO LECTURERS' EXPERIENCES OF CHALLENGES RELATING TO THEORY AND PRACTICE INTEGRATION

4.3.1 First Theme: Facilitation of learning
4.3.1.1 Category: Social workers as facilitators of learning 4.3.1.1 (a) *Sub-category*: Teaching methods 4.3.1.1 (b) *Sub-category*: Strategies aimed at integrating theory and practice 4.3.1.1 (c) *Sub-category*: Collaboration among facilitators of learning
4.3.2 Second Theme: Academic background
4.3.2.1 Category: Student under-preparedness for academic discourse 4.3.2.1 (a) *Sub-category*: Language 4.3.2.2 (b) *Sub-category*: Reading skills 4.3.2.2 (c) *Sub-category*: Writing skills

4.3.1 FIRST THEME: FACILITATION OF LEARNING

Ramsden (2003:41) asserts "that there is no such thing as learning in itself". He defines learning as "a change in the way we conceptualize the world around us" (p.40). Conception according to Ramsden refers to a type of relation between a person and a phenomenon. In the academic sense, conception therefore illustrates how a student derives the meaning of something. Therefore how meaning is facilitated constitutes facilitation of learning in educating and training of social work students. It relates to the methods facilitated "in order to change the way students conceptualize the world around them" (p.40).

4.3.1.1 Category: Social workers as facilitators of learning

The SACSSP prescribes that only persons with a social work degree may assume the responsibility of the training of social work students (SACSSP, 2003).

Participants mentioned that they do not have adequate support in terms of facilitation of learning. The following quotes illustrate participants' need for support based on the fact that they do not have basic training in teaching.

Lecturers need support given the fact that they do not have basic training on teaching.

The application of ELOs is important because we [lecturers] *may be knowledgeable in our specialist fields and not necessarily in adult teaching and learning*

Race (2005:1) asserts that in modern day education facilitators of teaching and learning should be concerned with factors underpinning all learning, which emanated from lecturers' (in this study) responses to their abilities to teach. Race cites collaboration as the most important factor in making learning happen. He argues for collaborating with learners, lecturers and tutors, as well as learning resource and course designers. He asserts that this collaboration is important in addressing effective learning (Race, 2005:viii). Hence the way teaching is facilitated (to meet students' educational needs) is significant.

4.3.1.1 (a) *Sub-category*: Teaching methods

All four lecturers explained the methods that they use during lecture sessions. The following quotes refer.

I do not stand in front of the class lecturing. Students are usually in groups and then have to read, analyse the literature. This is followed either as a presentation on PowerPoint by the students as a group, role plays to illustrate the techniques...

Student are al so in groups of 4, with a checklist on a specific technique. Two students will then do an interview while the others look at the checklist and guide students where they were wrong or give them marks for peer evaluation. During

presentations the lecturer will give input on the specific topic. Students sometimes al so do practical work during lectures applying the theory via case studies or using their own experiences.

Students are regularly required to prepare and present work in class which we then discuss as a group with me playing an active leadership role in the discussion. We rely on modern technology in PowerPoint group presentation and with reference to text which students have to read in class and which then form the basis of discussion.

I generally use three modes of teaching and learning facilitation: I divide the time between (i) content driven or introductory facilitation of information to set up their small group discussions; (ii) small group discussion around a selected case study or newspaper article; and (iii) report back from small group discussions and then integrating theory with the practice on the basis of the case study discussion.

I prefer interaction to didactic style...because one is then aware of student understanding and interest and can relate to it and generate teaching and learning in class. The didactic style takes place in a vacuum and makes me feel isolated and unmotivated.

For each lecture I have listed a number of concepts in which the course outline which form the reference for students' knowing, understanding and applying in terms of Bloom's taxonomy consequently they can constantly test their learning experience.

In terms of experiential learning theory: The learning styles of traditional teaching practices focus more on abstract perception and individual reflective processing which indicates the more passive learner and learning process. Prior learning experiences use concrete perception and active processing as a basis of

learning. The challenge is to focus on all learning styles and particularly their impact on curriculum, teaching and assessment.

Critical thinking (reasoning leading to conclusions) texts are used, also requiring class interaction and argument. I feel much more comfortable using an interactive than with a didactic lecturing approach consequently slip into facilitating student participation quite easily.

Methods most commonly used are small group discussions. Most participants make use of a mix of the various methods mentioned in Chapter Two, Table 2.6 with regard to their facilitation of learning. Traditions of facilitating learning that were mentioned by participants in this research included adult education approaches of which the following methods are used but not necessarily mentioned by all participants. These include dialogical methods, issue-based learning and experiential learning.

It seems that good teaching is sustained in a context where educators believe that all learners can succeed and grow which is synonymous with the underlying beliefs of OBE (Spady, 1994b and Department of Education, 1995) and where incorporating cooperative learning principles in the classroom which is more than just putting students in groups (Siciliano, 2001).

4.3.1.1 (b) *Sub-category*: Strategies aimed at integrating theory and practice

Weimer (2002:73) asserts that much literature on education "loosely links" teaching and learning and is focused on what the teacher is supposed to do and how this is to be facilitated to effect successful learning. With regard to the aforementioned all the lecturers mentioned the strategies and techniques that they use to promote integration of theory and practice.

Students are firstly informed of the theoretical framework of the third year ... The intervention strategies of each theoretical framework are discussed by use of

examples like case studies, role-plays, group discussions, alignment with various pieces of legislation. A lot of class discussion requires application of theory concepts...They [students] *have supervision, which I co-ordinate myself with the group of supervisors thereby reinforcing linking of theory and practice from classroom to individual projects conducted in the field practice community.*

The lecturer uses journal articles, checklist to practice (interviewing skills) with a critical friend (role plays).

Using case studies, topical issues, newspaper articles to trigger aim of lecture and discussion around it; small group discussion and feedback. I generally refer to their macro projects constantly so that the implementation of theory becomes comprehensible. Students can connect strongly with social issues and with values from their own background experiences. Elicits much input & participation.

With reference to participants' account of the facilitation methods that they employ that promote a deep learning approach include the following methods i.e. dialogical, issue-based and experiential learning techniques.

The strategies and techniques used by lecturers are constructivist learning techniques discussed in Chapter Two Section 2.4.1. Hence it can be concluded that the facilitation of learning in the classroom setting is aimed at promoting deep learning and therefore theory and practice integration. The question remains however; why do students still struggle to integrate theory if the strategies that promote deep learning are implemented by facilitators of learning? Similarly, if lecturers and students work collaboratively where are the gaps in the curriculum that continue to present the challenges that students experience with theory integration? Could it possibly be linked to the next category that was mentioned by lecturers which is collaboration between lecturers and facilitators of the fieldwork programmes?

4.3.1.1 (c) ***Sub-category*: Collaboration between facilitators of learning**

The lecturers who participated in the research mentioned that there is not sufficient cooperation and collaboration between facilitators of learning. This includes fieldwork coordinators (practice teachers) and field supervisors' cooperation and collaboration with lecturers as well as lecturers among themselves upholding the same standard for instruction and assessment.

It is of utmost importance that the practicum coordinator and supervisors work in collaboration with the lecturer ....It is important to have good contact and collaboration with these people from the lecturers' side.
"It would help my sense of direction if other lecturers supported the high standards that I think we should uphold – high standards of student work ethic and conscientious response to teaching and learning, that is".

The issue of collaboration was also mentioned by field supervisors and students both at UWC and NMMU. I have accounted for students' challenges with regard to the lack of collaboration between fieldwork coordinators and field supervisors under Category 4.2.2.1: Suitability of placements.

For practice education to be effective it is essential that lecturers, practice teachers and field supervisors work collaboratively in the best interest of student academic progress at the same time serving vulnerable people (Nzira & Williams, 2008). I concur with Nzira & Williams (2008) that students' success depends largely on the collaboration between facilitators of learning at least as a foundation for academic progress.

4.3.2 SECOND THEME: ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

Schenck (2009) refers to the term 'poverty of understanding" to mean the lack of access to good education to enable students to apply knowledge to real world context. This kind of poverty is exacerbated by other personal challenges like

having to care for siblings and the household which have an impact on the conditions for studying. Breier's (2007) research on recognition of prior learning confirms that student's poor secondary schooling does not prepare them adequately for tertiary education.

All the participants mentioned the type of student that UWC accommodates as a challenge for facilitating learning because most of them come from previously disadvantaged schools. They struggle generally with critical thinking skills and writing skills.

The following quotes relates to participants' perception of the type of student in the social work programme.

The quality of students in terms of previous learning is also not well and students come from disadvantaged schools with limited understanding of analyzing and implementing of theory.
There is also a variety of comprehension by students, some are excellent, with good background in education and others are very poor in learning.

It seems that lecturers attribute students' approach to learning to their educational background which is predominantly from disadvantaged schools. Ramsden (2003) asserts that the concept 'approach to learning' is about the different learning tasks that students engage with and what the learning task is for the student. Therefore it is not characteristic of the individual student in terms of something that the student has or does not have. It is the relation between the student and the learning process. There are two aspects with regard to approach to learning: the student's search for meaning (or not) when he engages with a task, and the way in which the student organizes the task. This in turn is linked to surface and deep approaches to learning (Ramsden, 2003:41- 45).

Surface approach to learning is often characterized by the learner relying on rote learning (memorizing concepts) to complete the requirements of externally imposed tasks and is superficial understanding (Geyser, 2004).

There are certain characteristics of course designs that are associated with a surface approach. These include a heavy workload, a lot of class contact and excessive course material. It is associated with a lack of opportunity to engage with course material meaningfully. Such courses usually have prescribed or compulsory subjects and are limited in choosing the method of studying. The assessment system is usually threatening and anxiety provoking (Rust, 2002:149). Knowledge is not embedded and the student cannot apply it in the real world setting. "It is about quantity without quality" (Ramsden, 2003:45). In contrast, deep learning is a process of learning that build on previous knowledge which the learner can apply in a similar context (Oko 2008:119-121).

Deep learning on the other hand is achieved by either operational learning (facilitating a logical, sequential approach building on from one concept to another) or comprehensive learning (the understanding of broad outlines of concepts and ideas, analyzing and applying knowledge in his/her world view) or versatile learning (which is a combination of both the previous with the purpose of deep understanding based on sound scientific knowledge). The intention of deep learning is for the student to understand; therefore the focus is on what is significant. The students relate previous knowledge to current knowledge and draw knowledge from different courses. Opportunity is provided to relate theoretical knowledge to real world experiences Oko (2008:119-121).

Gibbs (1992:10-11) as cited in Rust (2002:149) argues that a deep approach can be fostered when the course design is characteristic of a student-centered approach to learning and there is interaction with others (co-operative learning and therefore social constructivist theory). In this context learning is facilitated so that course material is learnt as "integrated wholes" and knowledge is related to previous and

current knowledge and can be applied in the real world (Gibbs, 1992:10-11 as cited in Rust, 2002:149).

4.3.2.1 Category: Student under-preparedness for academic discourse

All the lecturers mentioned that they struggle with the levels of comprehension which they base on students' prior knowledge or the lack thereof when they (students) enter university.

It would be wonderful if the motivation for learning were an unquenchable thirst for learning new things. But alas this is not so. More mundane and bread-and-butter issues for survival drive the students.

Lecturers' sentiments are confirmed by Weimer (2002:95) who asserts that current day students are less prepared for tertiary education than previous decades. She ascribes this to the students' motivation for studies which is survival and getting a good job. In the UWC context a study by Breier (2010) indicates that if this culture of learning was not nurtured during secondary schooling, students struggle to adapt at university and they are not familiar with academic discourse.

4.3.2.1 (a) *Sub-category:* Language

Lecturers mentioned that most students' first language is not English (refer to Chapter Three Figure 3.1 which indicates the mother tongue of the main student population) which is the language of instruction. The following quote reflects the perception of participants (lecturers) with regard to language being a barrier to students' ability to integrate theory and practice.

Language barriers affect the students' progress and competence

Reading and writing in English for students whose mother tongue is not English is a challenge (Schenck, 2009). Furthermore they are expected to do so using the

language of learning (LoLT), meaning the 'type' of English that the academic institution requires of students (Van Rensberg & Lamberti, 2004:71). These authors suggest placing students in same language groups, facilitating co-operative learning; which promotes deep learning. While students can use their mother tongue during small group discussion they report to the bigger class using the LoLT. This not only improves the students' development of the LoLT but also increases the opportunity for them to understand and apply the subject content more meaningfully.

Van Rensburg & Lamberti (2004:73) make the assumption that there are at least three different languages of origin in any given lecture room in South African universities. This assumption is confirmed in Chapter Three Figure 3.1 regarding the student population from which the sample for this research was drawn. The population contained six mother tongue languages.

It can be concluded therefore that students struggle to integrate theory and practice due to at least one fact - that they do not understand the subject content as it is presented in the LoLT with which they are not familiar. Based on the use of the LoLT, participants make the assumption that students have poor reference and summarizing skills. These are associated with reading skills.

4.3.2.1 (b) *Sub-category*: Reading skills

Participants said that students lack a culture of reading and therefore critical thinking skills. Based on this restriction they would indeed be challenged to integrate theory and practice. They would much rather often "copy from the internet" as one participant mentioned.

Students tend not to read hard copies which require concentration and paraphrasing. To copy something from the internet is easily accessible to students in possession of laptop computers ... we should address this sloppy tendency because very little learning takes place with this custom.

The challenges with reading skills seem to be associated with the students' academic background and the culture or practice of learning from which they come. As was mentioned in Chapter Three Section 3.6.1.and confirmed in the study by Breier (2010), the majority of UWC students come from previously disadvantaged schools. It cannot be assumed that they were taught how to read for academic purposes. They therefore need support, referred to by Van Rensburg & Lamberti (2004) as "scaffolding," meaning that tasks are organised to support students to be able to understand difficult texts better. In this regard, the authors suggest that lecturers should be specific about the reading skills that students should employ (i.e. skimming, scanning or intensive) for a particular task or assignment. This includes telling students approximately how much time they should spend on a particular reading, related to the purpose for reading (p.80).

The authors further assert that lecturers should not assume that students are able to comprehend academic literature (given their poor secondary schooling) nor should it be assumed that they know *how* to read for academic purposes. Therefore lecturers should be "explicit" about the purpose of reading (Van Rensberg and Lamberti, 2004:79). In addition to their limited reading skills it was said that students lack the ability to summarize an article or extract from literature which results in poor writing skills.

4.3.2.1 (c) *Sub-category*: Writing skills

Participants said that students' writing and communication skills are impacted by the language of instruction, which is English. Participants all agreed that language impeded students' learning and those students do not have a culture of reading; therefore their written and spoken English remains poor.

Students tend to be poor in both spoken and in written English as the university's language.

Students find it easy to verbally explain how they used/applied ELOs but when it comes to writing they struggle.

Some students are good with presentations and struggle with written work.

Van Rensberg & Lamberti (2004:85) contend that lecturers often refer to students' lack of writing skills because they focus rather on the grammatical errors than the argument presented. They suggest that "students should be socialised into written discourse of the discipline." This means that tasks should be broken into manageable pieces and increased to more advanced tasks as students progress and become more acquainted and familiar with LoLT.

It can be concluded that because English is not most students' mother tongue, their writing skills are understandably hampered. Nevertheless, dialogical and experiential methods of facilitation will promote student learning and address the barriers in language and writing skills which restrict the integration of theory and practice (Van Rensburg & Lamberti, 2004:85). Suggestions by Van Rensburg & Lamberti (2004) of placing students in small groups of same language speakers in which the individual is free to communicate in own language, promote a learner-centered approach to teaching and learning. Such an approach generates deep learning which is likely to improve integration of theory and practice as a higher order level of knowledge. Students should then be able to apply theoretical knowledge in real world context.

4.4 SUMMARY

This research set out to examine the challenges experienced by lecturers, field supervisors and students with regard to theory and practice integration in the context of ELOs. This chapter presented the findings relating to the three different units of analysis. The discussion of the findings shows that the three units of analysis have various themes in common.

The themes that these have in common were discussed under the various headings. All the participants motivated for greater collaboration between the role players. A significant factor mentioned by field supervisors and lecturers is the personal challenges that students experience in terms of theory and practice integration. The challenges are related to poor secondary schooling which did not prepare them adequately for tertiary education.

That this continues to disadvantage students up to their third year is most unfortunate as it has adverse effects on their ability to integrate theory and practice at an advanced level. Significant too is that students and field supervisors experienced the Intermediate Fieldwork Education programme to be too demanding and content driven; which is contrary to the emphasis required by the OBE approach.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The goal of the research was to explore and describe the challenges experienced by social work students, field supervisors and lecturers in the Social Work Department at UWC with regard to theory and practice integration. During the analysis of the data collected from students the goal of the study was adapted because, as the process of data –collection and first analysis unfolded, more questions arose about students' experiences of integrating theory into practice and I wanted to obtain a more detailed and in-depth understanding of these experiences. Therefore I included students from another university, NMMU, with more or less the same student profile but with a different structure of fieldwork supervision, to compare their experiences with those of UWC students. The objectives of the study did not change from:

- explore and describe the challenges experienced by lecturers with regard to teaching strategies and techniques to facilitate the integration of theory and practice,
- explore and describe the challenges experienced by fieldwork supervisors in terms of the methods used for supervision to facilitate theory and practice integration in fieldwork education,
- explore and describe the challenges experienced by students relating to the integration of theory and practice in fieldwork education and
- explore and describe the personal obstacles and challenges experienced by students that impact on integration of theory and practice.

In Chapter Four I reported extensively on the findings relating to the stated objectives i.e. the experiences of the three sampled groups and related findings to relevant literature. In this chapter I have summarized and drawn conclusions from

the core findings that emerged from the data. As this is a case study I acknowledged different perspectives and similarities. I also summarized findings from core literature related to the findings of the research in Chapter Four. In Chapter Five recommendations are presented based on conclusions at the end of the summary of the major themes which follow below.

5.2 SUMMARY OF CORE THEMES THAT EMERGED RELATING CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATING THEORY AND PRACTICE

5.2.1 Facilitation of student learning in the academic/class room setting

In the following summary I firstly compare the experiences of the students and then compare lecturers' views. Field work supervisors did not contribute to this theme.

Participating students expressed in no uncertain terms that they experience a huge gap between what is taught in the classroom and what is expected and happening in "real world" context. They had very strong views on the issues that influence their ability to integrate theory and practice:

5.2.1.1 Structure of the third year programme

Both student groups experienced that the workload of the third year programme was overwhelming and that they struggled to keep abreast with the academic demands. Students from UWC in particular seemed to experience "over assessment" and reported feeling overwhelmed by the amount of assessment work for the third year programme in general. Learning outcomes and assessment strategies are not always explicit and students did not always know what is expected of them.

There were also concerns that the tasks are not scaffolded in such a way that their previous learning prepared them sufficiently for fieldwork practice. Students experienced that "scattered" learning content did not prepare them for

expectations relating to intermediate learning outcomes. Practicum tasks often preceded the lectures and thus they are not prepared for assignments in practice.

5.2.1.2 Strategies for facilitation of learning

Students voiced their preferences for an interactive and co-operative style of facilitating learning that makes use of social constructivist teaching and learning strategies and techniques to facilitate integration of theory and practice. Although they appreciate group discussions in classrooms, working in groups for assignments with credits are not experienced as "teamwork". An instructional style utilizing Power Point presentations is experienced as not stimulating and promoting passive learning.

The lecturers who participated in the research provided elaborate narratives indicating that they indeed use interactive teaching and learning strategies, including case studies and simulations that are intended to facilitate deep learning and assist integration of theory and practice. They emphasised that social work lecturers do not have any formal training in facilitation of learning and that this limitation might affect teaching and learning which affects their confidence as educators. It can be concluded that students are then possibly at times the guinea-pigs for lecturers' efforts to transfer knowledge and skills. Nevertheless, in the face of the student-centered learning, with its modern participatory methods that the lecturers are intending to provide, further reasons for low throughput and obstacles to reaching ELOs must be sought.

5.2.1.3 Academic background (of students)

Lecturers perceived the task of achieving theory and practice integration in the first instance as no problem within the classroom setting. The problem is rather students' unpreparedness for tertiary education given the poor scholastic backgrounds of most of the students.

Literature (Vella 2000; Gravett 2004; Hay et al., 2008) confirms the importance of programme structuring and that work overload is contra-productive for the

integration of theory and practice. Gibbs (1992); Goldhaber (2000); Conner (2004) and Osman & Castle (2006) all confirm that deep learning and learning that promotes theory and practice integration is facilitated by social constructivist teaching and learning strategies. These strategies are in line with OBE principles applied to the social work programme in South Africa and propagated social constructivist strategies and techniques (Barkley et al., 2005). Barkley et al. (2005) also indicate that the decision about what method to use to facilitate integration of theory and practice that promotes deep learning depends on the diagnostic and baseline assessment done in the early stages of programme planning. Various literature sources that were consulted (Bozalek, 2009, Dykes, 2009, Breier, 2010, Gravett & Geyser, 2004) confirm that students are underprepared for academic discourse and for using the language of teaching and learning which results in poor reading and writing skills.

I conclude that literature supports the participants' experiences that the integration of theory and practice starts with the planning of the academic learning programme and the appropriate strategies for facilitation of learning in the classroom.

Recommendations relating to facilitation of learning in the classroom setting for integration of theory/knowledge and practice:

- Baseline and diagnostic assessment should be done at the outset of the teaching programme during the first few lectures and supervision sessions at all year levels.
- Coursework modules should be designed in such a way that assessment tasks and criteria are clearly aligned to learning outcomes (what students are expected to know and be able to do at the end of a module).
- Assessment criteria and strategies should be made more explicit in course outlines.
- Assessment should be non-threatening and can be facilitated by preparing students in advance with assessment criteria (in the course outline).

- Facilitators should provide feedback that is specific to the student's learning needs and to provide this timeously.
- Learning should be structured in such a way that theory and practice integration can be facilitated individually, in a (small) group or (big) class.
- Resources such as literature, research and audio-visual material should be available to encourage students' critical thinking abilities and promote active learning. To facilitate integrating theory and practice, students need to have opportunities for simulating interventions for "real life" situations
- Staff development /induction programmes at the universities should prioritize the orientation and training of lecturers without formal training, in a new education paradigm and appropriate methods to integrate theory and practice.
- Bridging courses for students from previously disadvantaged schools by universities should no longer just be an ideal but should be part of the training programme for such students.

5.2.2 Facilitation of learning in the fieldwork setting

All participants in the study expressed great concerns about the relevance, co-operation and co-ordination of academic and fieldwork learning for the integration of theory and practice.

5.2.2.1 Appropriate fieldwork placements

Student participants indicated that fieldwork placements are not always suited to/relevant for facilitating the type of learning and achieving the learning outcomes that are expected from students. Students therefore struggle to meet the expected learning outcomes.

Fieldwork supervisors shared students' concerns that fieldwork placements do not always meet academic expectations in that the there are not always qualified and/or experienced social workers to supervise students which then is against the

SACSSP requirements for student assessment. They also reiterated that there is a gap between what the department requires in terms of practical and what the agencies can offer.

5.2.2.2 Quality of supervision

Students were concerned about the poor quality of supervision at some placements Participants voiced concern that most field supervisors are not acquainted with the exit level outcomes, nor are they familiar with the theoretical frameworks that students are taught at university. The theoretical frameworks that guide organizations' service delivery are often different to that being taught at the university and some of the supervisors were not qualified social workers.

Fieldwork supervisors shared these concerns and therefore wanted more collaboration between the university/fieldwork coordinator and field supervisors to ensure that students are meeting academic requirements but also considering the agency realities.

Lecturers also expressed the view that collaboration between academics and field work supervisors has become a paramount priority to ensure theory and practice integration. The collaboration effort should include the Social Work Department taking the lead in the orientation of fieldworkers to theories taught at the university and assessment in terms of ELOs. Working agreements /contracts are necessities and parties should be held liable if such agreements are breached. More commitment to supervise students adequately is required from placement organizations.

Literature by Nzira & Williams (2008) indicates that it is inevitable that students not meet the learning outcomes if placement requirements are vastly different to academic requirements. This difference is likely to occur with practical demands of the field conflicting with theory implementation of academia. The question

arises then whether a suitable placement is something in the idealistic mind of the academic?

I concluded that lack of collaboration for effective mentoring and assessment in practice infringes on students' academic development. If the professionals responsible for the assessment of students either do not agree and/or have vague ideas of learning outcomes, and/or have very limited knowledge of assessment practices, then the integration of theory and practice will be an illusion.

Recommendations based on the conclusions of findings relating fieldwork learning and student supervision:

- Academics should collaborate with practitioners in the planning of practice experiences for students based on the learning outcomes or the program. They should confer on "how" to plan maximum learning in practice.
- Social workers who supervise students should be trained in terms of the theoretical frameworks taught at university and the exit level outcomes. This could be facilitated by way of Continuing Professional Development (CPD).
- Social workers who supervise students should be registered (SAQA accredited) assessors in order to provide a suitable quality of training to students.
- Contracts with fieldwork agencies should be explicit with regard to academic expectations of students. Lecturers and field supervisors should work collaboratively to facilitate teaching methods that would encourage meaning making. This could be facilitated by making working agreements between the university (Social Work Department) and the agencies more explicit.
- Assessment should be non-threatening which can be facilitated by preparing students in advance with assessment criteria (in the course outline).

- Facilitators should provide feedback to students that are specific to the student's learning needs and to provide this timeously.
- The suitability of placements is a concern for immediate attention. At a time when Social Work has been declared a "scarce skill," the Department of Social Development should become a major collaborator in lobbying for and allocating human and financial resources for student supervision, also at non- government organizations. Monitoring of the commitment of all organizations to the development of the profession (as prescribed in the SACSSP code of conduct) could then be carried out.

5.2.3 Personal obstacles and challenges experienced by students that impact on integration of theory and practice.

Participants mentioned different factors relating to personal challenges that impede students' ability to integrate theory and practice. The following discussion summarizes these issues only briefly as most of the concerns connect with themes presented above.

Students related personal challenges in financial resources (access to books), emotional readiness for practice, language barriers and time management as personal issues that impair theory and practice integration. Although only two students mentioned concerns about language barriers in practice situations, this issue is potentially much more common within the context of diversity for social services in South Africa. If the student is unable to communicate to the client in the client's own language, therapeutic work is far less effective and neither student not client benefits from the engagement

Supervisors regarded students' personal challenges as issues pertaining to time management which they felt might be related to work overload but also to lack of skills in management of time.

Lecturers attributed personal challenges that the students experience (in integrating theory and practice) to the students' deprived scholastic background. Added to poor reading and writing skills is the use of English as the academic language and the language of instruction. Basic understanding and communication of course material and course content is therefore flawed.

The findings that students have various personal challenges that impact on their learning and therefore on integration of theory and practice are supported by many other studies.

Earl (2008) and Schenk (2008) confirm that issues such as lack of finances for access to text books, a basic resource, were experienced as hampering student progress. Students also felt that they were not emotionally prepared for some of the cases that they were expected to intervene with at the agencies. Race & Pickford (2005) indicate that emotional intelligence and emotional maturity of students impact on their academic success. Geyser (2004) indicates that the content of a curriculum should be realistic and manageable in terms of the allocated time.

Literature by Breier (2010), Bozalek (2009), Dykes (2009) and Schenck (2009) also confirms that student academic background plays a major role with regard to throughput. Linked to the aforementioned, is their preparedness for academia in terms of the language used for academic discourse referred to as LoLT by van Rensberg and Lamberti (2004). These authors suggest that students be put in same (their mother tongue) language in cooperative/small groups so that they are able to communicate more meaningfully and with confidence.

Recommendations based on the conclusions of findings relating to students' personal challenges:

- The Social Work Department should consider counseling out students who do not fit the professional profile by developing policies which are in line with university graduate attributes and the SACSSP code of ethics.
- The workload should be reviewed and aligned to learning outcomes more realistically so that students can manage completing tasks in the time allocated.
- Field supervisors and students should be participants in the review of the workload/content of the programme and provide recommendations based on their experiences.
- Student development programmes on academic writing and the development of proficiency in English for educational development should be strengthened and formalized as part of the curriculum throughout the four year programme.
- The use of same language small groups should be used to build confidence and provide a scaffold for using the LoLT.
- Priority attention must be given to supportive supervision in terms of the development of emotional preparedness for intervention with traumatic cases. Within a violence-stricken society, social work students will inevitably get involved in very traumatic cases for which they need to be prepared or at least be supported in the event of such a case.

5.3 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS RELATING TO THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND STRATEGY USED IN THIS STUDY.

In choosing qualitative research approach I was influenced by the fact that multiple perspectives of reality exist. My assumption was that knowledge of the challenges of theory and practice integration would be derived from the experiences of the people involved with the issue. I managed to get close to the participants who were objects of this research. In so doing I could explore and describe their perspectives and experiences. The research relied on interpretive inquiry, inductive analysis and the meaning that participants hold for the issue. I

was able to explore and describe the depth, richness and complexity of the issue regarding the challenges experienced by participants that related to theory and practice integration.

I preferred not to start with a given theory about the integration of theory and practice but my conceptual framework suggested assumptions about preferred learning strategies which guided the analysis. An exploratory-descriptive design utilizing a case study tradition of enquiry was the most appropriate means to satisfy my concern for better understanding the experiences of my respondents. As a novice researcher I was challenged by the mass of data that was collected in this case-study.

The thematic analysis as described by Creswell (2007:244 by aggregating information into clusters and providing details that support the themes. This was a challenging process but useful to explore and describe participants' experiences of challenges relating to theory and practice integration. I did not generalize beyond the case but made descriptions for understanding its complexity. Linking to direct interpretation (Creswell, 2007:245) I examined a particular instance by describing and depicting a single situation of a NMMU student who was challenged by language barriers (see Chapter Four Section 4.1.2.1(c)) without looking at multiple experiences by other participants. I included this as a sub-category as I thought it is important to be cognisant of challenges with regard to language as it impacts on achieving the learning outcomes and not in the best interest of the client. To verify the all the data I made use of a critique checklist, member checking, triangulation and reflexivity.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The research was conducted with role-players involved with third year level teaching and learning in the Social Work Department at UWC, relating to Intermediate Fieldwork Education. The findings can therefore not be generalized to schools or departments at other universities. I did however carry out thick

descriptions of the case and the processes followed and other researchers might find these descriptions useful in initiating a similar study. A second limitation is that four of the eight lecturers participated in the research. Therefore the experiences of lecturers at the Social Work Department of UWC are related to only half of the population.

My involvement in the Social Department of Social, as well as my commitment and passion for quality training of social workers, are issues that might question my interpretations on the findings. Hence I presented a detailed reflection in Chapter Three Section 3.9, in which I reflected on ways and means that I employed for ensuring of the trustworthiness of the study.

Recommendations relating to the methodology used and further research

- It will be highly relevant for curriculum planners and practitioners, to investigate how Schools and Departments of Social Work at various universities have managed the transition from content-driven to outcomes-based facilitation of learning.
- A study involving all South African universities to explore and describe generic challenges experienced by academics, field supervisors and students with regard to theory and practice integration in the context of ELOs would be a final recommendation.
- A combined qualitative-quantitative design could be employed so that the in-depth experiences of participants could be explored and at the same time a comprehensive survey could yield data for generalization.

5.5 FINAL CONCLUSION

The goal and objectives of this study were met, within the mentioned limitations. The research question as stated: "What are the challenges experienced by social work lecturers, field supervisors and third year social work students in the Social Work Department at UWC with regard to theory and practice integration?" was

answered. Conclusions could be made that related to the challenges experienced by participants in this study with regard to theory and practice integration in the context of ELOs. Recommendations arose from the conclusions and their feasibility can be tested against the theoretical and empirical foundation that this research has constructed.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Amstuz, D. 1999. Adult Learning: Moving towards more inclusive theories and practice. *New Direction for Adult Continuing Education*, 82:19-32.

Anderson, T. 2002. An updated and theoretical rationale for interaction. *ITFORUM Paper No.63.* Available: http://it.coe.uga.edu/itforum/paper63.htm. [Accessed: 21/01/2010].

Atherton, J. 2005. *Learning and Teaching: Experiential learning.* Available: http://www.learningandteaching.info/learning/experience.htm.[Accessed: 23/02/2010].

Babbie, E. & Mouton, J. 2001. *The practice of social research.* (South African ed). Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Bacon, D.R. 2005. The effect of group projects on content-related learning. *Journal of Management Education*, 29(2): 248 -267.

Barkley, E. F., Cross, K.P. & Major, C.H. 2005. *Collaborative learning techniques. A handbook for college faculty.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Berk, L. E. 2000. *Child development* (5th ed). Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon.

Biggs, J. 1999. What the student does: Teaching for enhancing learning. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 18 (1): 57.

Biggs, J. 2003. *Teaching for quality learning at university.* Buckingham: Maidenhead, SRHE.

Bitzer, E. 2004. In: Co-operative learning. *In*: Gravett & Geyser (eds). *Teaching and learning in higher education.* Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Blakkie, N. 2000. *Designing social research.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bloom, B. S. 1956. *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (ed.). The Classification of Educational Goals. Susan Fauer Company, Inc. pp. 201-207.

Botha, N.J. 2000. *Supervisie en konsultasie in maatskaplike werk.* (Eerste Uitgawe). Stellenbosch: Druforma.

Botha, N.J. 1985. Onderrigmodel vir doeltreffende supervisie. *Maatskaplike Werk/Social Work*, 21(4): 239 -248.

Boud, D. 1990. Assessment and Promotion of Academic values. *Studies in higher education*, 15(1): 101-111.

Boughey, C. 2004. Higher education in South Africa: context, mission and legislation. *In*: Gravett & Geyser (eds). *Teaching and learning in higher education.* Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Bozalek, V. 2009. Outcomes-based assessment: Necessary evil or transformative potential? *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*, 45(1): 91 – 110.

Brady, L. 1996. Outcomes-based education: A critique. *The Curriculum Journal*, 7(1): 5-16.

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. 2006. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3: 77-101.*

Breier, M. 2007. *Recognizing phronesis or practical wisdom in the recognition (assessment) of prior learning.* Unpublished. Paper presented at the 5th International Conference of Researching work and Learning, Cape Town, 2-5 December 2007.

Breier, M. 2010. *The student retention and graduate destination study: Dropout or stop out at the University of the Western Cape*. Available: http://www.hsrcpress.ac.za. [Accessed: 31/03/2010].

Brown, L.M. & Gilligan, C. 1992. *Meeting at the crossroads: Women's psychology and girls' development. Cambridge:* Harvard University Press

Butler, G. 2010. Reflecting on emotion in social work. *In:* Knott, C. & Scragg, T. 2010. (eds). *Reflective practice in social work.* (2nd ed). Glasgow: Learning Matters Ltd.

Capper, A. & Jamison, M. 1993. OBE re-examined: from structural functionalism to post structuralism. *Education Policy*, 7(4): 427-445.

Carroll, J. B. 1956. *Language, thought, and reality: Selected writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf.* Boston: M.I.T. Press.

Caspi, J. & Reid, W.J. 2002. *Educational supervision in social work:* New York Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press.

Coffey, A. & Atkinson, P. 1996. *Making sense of qualitative data: Complementary research strategies.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Collins, K. & van Breda, A. 2010. Academic support for first year social work students in South Africa. *Social Work /Maatskaplike Wer*k, 46 (l): 14-25.

Conner, M. 2004. *Andragogy and pedagogy. Ageless learner 1997-2004.* Available: http://agelesslearner.com/intros/androgogy.html. [Accessed: 19/06/2009].

Conole, G.; Dyke, M.; Oliver, M. & Seale, J. 2004. Mapping pedagogy and tools for effective learning design. *Computers & Education*, 43:17-33.

Creswell, J.W. 1994. *Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches.* Thousand Oakes, CA: Sage Plubishers.

Creswell, J.W 1998. *Qualitative inquiry and research design – Choosing among five traditions.* Thousand Oakes, California: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J.W. 2007. *Qualitative inquiry & research design. Choosing from five approaches.* (2nd ed). London: Sage Publications.

D' Cruz, H. & Jones, M. 2004. *Social work research ethical and political contexts.* London: Sage Publications.

Dalgarno, B. 2001. Interpretations of constructivism and consequences for computer assisted learning. *British Journal of Educational Technology,* 32(2): 183-194.

Delport, C.S.L. 2005. Quantitative data collection methods. *In*: De Vos, A.S.; Fouche, C.B.; Delport, C.S.L. & Strydom H. 2005. *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human service professions.* (3rd ed). Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Department of Education. 1995. *White Paper 1 on education and training,* Government Gazette No. 16312. Pretoria: Department of Education.

Department of Education. 1996. National Education Policy Act. 101 of 1996 Government Gazette No. 17118. Cape Town: Department of Education.

Department of Education. 1997. *Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the transformation of higher education.* Pretoria: Department of Education.

Department of Education. 1998. *Assessment policy in the general education and training bands, grades 9 and ABET.* Government Gazette No. 19640. Pretoria: Department of Education.

Department of Education. 2002. *Revised national curriculum. Grades R-9.* Government Gazette No. 23406. Pretoria: Department of Education.

Department of Education. 2004. Policy Framework for Education and Training. Pretoria: Department of Education.

De Vos, A.S. 2005 Qualitative data analysis and interpretation. *In*: De Vos, A.S.; Fouche, C.B.; Delport, C.S.L. & Strydom H. 2005. *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human service professions.* (3rd ed). Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

De Vos, A.S., Fouche, C.B. & Venter, L. 2002. Quantitative data analysis and interpretation. *In:* De Vos (ed). *Research at Grass roots: For the social sciences and human service professions.* (2nd ed). Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. 1994. *The handbook of qualitative research.* Thousand Oakes: Sage Publications.

Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. 2005. *The Sage handbook of qualitative research.* (3rd ed). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Dettlaff, A.J & Wallace, G. 2002. Promoting integration of theory and practice in field education- An instructional tool for field instructors and field educators. London: Hepworth Press. *The Clinical Supervisor,* 21(2): 145-160.

Doel, M. & Shardlow, S. 1986 (eds). *Social work in a changing world. An international perspective on practice learning.* Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.

Driver, R. Squires, A., Ruschworth, P. & Wood-Robinson, V. 1994. *Making sense of secondary science: Research into children's ideas.* London: Routledge.

Dykes, G.Z. 2009. Recognition of prior learning and support: Are the needs of RPL first year students different? *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*, 45(3): 314-326.

Earl, N. 2008. *Social work in social change: The profession and education of social workers in South Africa.* Unpublished. HSRC research monograph.

Egan, G. 1994. *The skilled helper: a problem-management approach to helping.* California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

Ely, M., Anzul; M., Friedman; T., Garner, D. & Streinmetz, A.C. 1991. *Doing qualitative research: Circles within circles.* New York: Falmer Press.

Engelbrecht, L.K. 2001. *Supervisie aan studente*. Wellington: Lanzo.

Engelbrecht, L.K. 2002. *'n Maatskaplike ontwikkelingsgerigte perspektief op supervisie aan maatskaplike studente by opleidingsinstansies in Suid Afrika.* D. Phil. Proefskrif. Stellenbosch: Universiteit van Stellenbosch.

Erlandson, D.A., Harris, E.L., Skipper, B.L. and Allen, S.D. 1993. *Doing naturalistic inquiry: A guide to methods.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Fakier, M. & Wagid, Y. 2004. OBE and creativity in South Africa. *International Journal of Special Education,* Vol. 19(2): 53-63.

Flyvbjerg, B. 2006. Five misunderstandings about case -study research. *Qualitative Inquiry.* 12 (2): 219-245.

Fouche, C.B. 2005. Qualitative research design. *In*: De Vos, A.S., Strydom, H., Fouche, C.B & Delport, C.S.L. (eds.) *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human service professions*. (3rd ed). Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Fouche, C.B. & De Vos, A.S. 2005. Quantitative research designs: *In*: De Vos, A.S., Strydom, H., Fouche, C.B & Delport, C.S.L. (eds.) *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human service professions*. (3rd ed). Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Gail-Jones, M. & Breader-Araje, L. 2002. The impact of constructivism on education: language, discourse, and meaning. *American Communication Journal*, 5(3) 2002.

Garcia, B. & Von Soest, D. 1997. Changing perception of diversity and oppression: MSW students discuss the effects of a required course. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 33(1): 119-128.

Geyser, H. 2004. Learning from assessment. *In*: Gravett, S & Geyser, H. (eds) 2004. *Teaching and learning in higher education*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Geyser, H. 2004. Programme development: A curriculum design perspective. *In*: Gravett, S & Geyser, H. (eds) 2004. *Teaching and learning in higher education.* Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Gibbs, G. 1992. *Improving the quality of student learning.* Bristol: Technical and educational services.

Gibbs, G. 2006. How assessment frames student learning. In: Bryan, C. & Clegg, K. (eds) *Innovative assessment in higher education.* London & New York: Routledge.

Glesne, C. and Peshkin, A. 1992. *Becoming qualitative researchers: an introduction.* White Plains, NY: Longman.

Goldstein, H. 2001. *Experiential learning - a foundation for social work Education and Practice.* Alexandra: Council on Social Work Education, Inc.

Gravett, S. 2004. Teaching and learning: establishing communities of enquiry and interpretation. In: Gravett, S. & Geyser, H. (eds) 2004. *Teaching and learning in higher education.* Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Gravett, S. 2004. Enhancing teaching through an exploration of biology of learning. In: Gravett, S. & Geyser, H. (eds) 2004. *Teaching and learning in higher education.* Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Greef, M. 2005. Information collection: Interviewing. *In:* De Vos, A.S., Fouche, C.B., Delport, C.S.L. & Strydom H. 2005. *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human service professions.* (3rd ed). Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Green, S. and Von Schlicht, E. 2003. *A Diverse student population: Teaching and learning in social work education.* Unpublished: University of Stellenbosch and Hugenote College.

Hawkins, P. & Shohet, R. 2000. *Supervision in the helping professions: supervision in context.* (2nd Revised ed). UK: Open University Press.

Hay, D., Kinchin, I. & Lygo-Baker, S. 2008. Making learning visible: The role concept mapping in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education* 33(3): 304 – 306.

Jacobs, E. E., Masson, R.L & Harvill, R.L. 2002. *Group counseling strategies and skills* (4th ed). Pacific Groove: Brooks/Cole.

Jansen, J. & Christie, P. 1999. *Changing curriculum - Studies on outcomes-based education in South Africa.* Kenwyn: Juta and Co Ltd.

Johnson, D.W., Johnson, R.T. & Stanne, M.B. 2000. *Cooperative learning methods: A meta-analysis.*
Available:http://www.tablelearning.com/uploads/File/EXHIBIT-B.pdf.
[Accessed: 23/02/2009].

Kadushin, A. 1985. *Supervision in social work.* (2nd ed). New York: Columbia University Press.

Kadushin, A. 1992. *Supervision in social work* (3rd ed). New York: Columbia University Press.

Kadushin, A. & Harkness, D. 2002. *Supervision in social work* (4th ed). New York & Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press.

Krathwohl, D.R. 2002. A Revision of Bloom's taxonomy: An overview. *Theory and practice*, 1543-0421 Vol 41(4): 212-218.

Killian, J. 2001. *Opleidingstrategieë vir praktykopleiers van voorgraadse maatskaplike werk-studente:* Ongepubliseerde MA tesis: Universiteit van Stellenbosch.

Kirst-Ashman, K. & Hull, G. 2002. *Generalist intervention model.* (3rd ed). California: Brooks/Cole.

Koh, L.C. 2002. The perceptions of nursing students of practice-based teaching. *Nurse Education Today.* 2 (1): 35-43.

Kolb, A.Y. & Kolb, D.A. 2005. Learning styles and learning spaces: Enhancing experiential learning in higher education. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 4(2): 193-212.

Kotze, G.S. 1999. Assessment for an outcomes-based approach. *Journal of Education,* 19(1):31-36.

Krueger, R.A. & Casey, M.A. 2000. *Focus groups.* (3rd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Leedy, D. 2001. *Practical research.* (4th ed). Planning and design. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Lit, S.W. & Shek, D.T.L. 2007. Application of social constructivist principles in field practice teaching in a Chinese context. *Social Work Education*, 26(4): 359-375.

Maree, K & Fraser, W.J. 2004. *Outcomes–based assessment.* South Africa: Heinemann Publishers.

Mays, N & Pope, C. 2000. Qualitative research in healthcare: Assessing quality in qualitative research. *Educate and Debate*, 3 (20): 50-51.

McKeachie, W.J. 2002. *McKeachie's teaching tips: Strategies, research, and theory for college and university teachers.* Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

McKenna, S. 2007. Assessment rubrics as a means of making expectations explicit. *The Independent Journal of Teaching and Learning.* Vol. 2 2007

Merriam, S.B. & Caffarella, R.S. 1999. *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide*. (2nd ed). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Merriam, S.B. 1988. *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Miles, M.B. & Huberman, A.M. 1994 *Qualitative data analysis: an expanded sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Moore, A. & Van Rooyen, L. 2002. Recognition of prior learning as an integral component of competency-based assessment in South Africa. *South African Journal of Education,* 22(4): 293-296.

Morgan, R. 2006. Using clinical skills laboratories to promote theory-practice integration during first year practical placement- An Irish perspective. *Journal of Clinical Nursing,* 15(2): 155-161.

Neuman, W.L. & Kreuger, L.W. 2003. *Social work research methods: qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Nicholas, L., Rautenbach, J. & Maistry, M. 2010. *Introduction to social work.* Cape Town: Juta & Company.

Nicholls, G. 2002. *Developing teaching and learning in higher education.* London: Routledge Falmer.

Nightingale D & Cromby J (eds) 1999: *Social constructionist psychology. A critical analysis of theory and practice.* Open University Press: Buckingham.

Nzira, V and Williams, P. 2008. *Anti-oppressive practice in health and social care.* London: Sage Publications.

Oko, J. 2008. *Understanding and using theory in social work.* London: Learning Matters.

Osman, R. & Castle, J. 2006. Making space for adult learners in higher education. *South African Journal of Higher Education,* 20(4): 515-527.

Patton, M.Q. 2002. *Qualitative research & evaluation.* (3rd ed). London: Sage Publications.

Pohl, 1999. Comparison of the original and revised taxonomy. Available: http://ace.schoolnet.org.za/cd/ukzncore2b/documents/core2b.bloom.htm. [Accessed: 19/06/2009].

Race, P. 2005. *Making learning happen: A guide for post-compulsory education.* London: Sage Publications.

Race, P. & Pickford, R. 2007. *Making teaching work: Teaching smarter in post-compulsory education.* London: Sage Publications.

Ramsden, P. 1992. *Learning to teach in higher education.* London: Routledge.

Ramsden, P. 2003. *Learning to teach in higher education.* (2nd ed). London: Routledge Falmer.

Rautenbach, N. & Chiba, J. 2010. In: Nicholas, L.: Rautenbach, J. & Maistry, M. 2010. *Introduction to social work.* Cape Town: Juta & Company.

White Paper on Social Welfare. 1997. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Rosenshine, B. & Meister, C. 1992. The use of scaffolds for teaching higher-order cognitive strategies. *Educational leadership*, 49(7): 22-33.

Rust, C. 2002. The Impact of Assessment on student learning: *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 3(2): 145-158.

Rust, C.; O'Donovan, B. & Price, M. 2005. A social constructivist assessment model: how the research literature shows us this could be best practice. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 30(3): 231-240.

Saroyan, A. & Amundsen, C. (eds). 2004. *Rethinking teaching in higher education: From a course design workshop to a faculty development framework.* Sterling: Stylus.

Schenck, C.J. 2009. The socio-economic realities of the social work students of the University of South Africa. *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk,* 45(3): 299-313.

Sewpaul, V. & Lombard, A. 2004. Social work education, training and standards in Africa. *Social Work Education*, 23(5): 537-554.

Shardlow, S. & Doel, M. 1996. *Practice learning and teaching.* London: British Association of Social Workers.

Siciliano, J. I. 2001. How to incorporate cooperative learning principles in the classroom: It's more than just putting students in groups. *Journal of Management Education*, 25(1): 8-20.

Slabbert, J.A. 1999. *Maximising human potential through facilitating lifelong learning – A new paradigm in education.* Unpublished research report. University of Pretoria, Pretoria.

Smethurst, C. 2010. Gender and reflective practice. *In:* Knott, C. & Scragg, T. (eds). 2010. *Reflective practice in social work.* Glasgow: Learning Matters.

South African Council for Social Services Professions (SACSSP). 2003. *Policy guidelines for course of conduct, code of ethics and the rules for social workers.* Available: http://www.sacssp.co.za. [Accessed: 21/02/2008 & 31/3/2010).

South African Pocket Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (3rd ed). 2001. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). 2001. *Criteria and guidelines for assessment of NQF unit standards and qualifications: Policy document.* Pretoria: SAQA.

South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). 2003. Qualification: Bachelor of Social Work. *Government Gazette* Vol. 452 No. 24362 of 7 February 2003. Available: http://www.saqa.org.za/nsb/sgestds/assessors2.html. [Accessed 21/02/2008].

South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). 2003. *Quality assurance and development: criteria and guidelines for registration of assessors.* Available: http://www.saqa.org.za.html/publications/pol-docs/assess_reg.html. [Accessed: 21/01/2010].

Spady, W. & Marshall, K. 1991. Beyond traditional Outcomes-Based Education. *Educational Leadership,* 49(2): 67-72.

Spady, W. 1994a. Choosing outcomes of significance. *Educational Leadership.* Vol. 51(6): 18–22.

Spady, W. 1994b. *Outcome-Based Education: Critical issues and answers.* Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators.

Spicer, N. 2004. Combining qualitative and quantitative methods. *In:* Seale (ed). *Researching society and culture*. London: Sage Publications.

Spouse, J. 2001. Bridging theory and practice in the supervisory relationship. *Journal of Advanced Nursing,* 33 (4): 512-522.

Stake, R. 1995. *The art of case study research.* Thousand Oakes: Sage Publications.

Stake, R. 2005. Qualitative case studies. *In*: Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (eds). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Strozier, A.L., Barnett-Queen, T. & Bennett, C.K. 2000. Supervision: Critical process and outcome variables. *The Clinical Supervisor*, 19(1): 21-37.

Strydom, H. & Delport, C.S.L. 2005. Sampling and pilot study in qualitative research. *In*: De Vos, A.S., Fouche, C.B.; Delport, C.S.L. & Strydom H 2005. *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human service professions.* (3rd ed). Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Suraj-Narayan, 2010. Management and Administration. *In* Nicholas, L., Rautenbach, J. & Maistry, M. 2010. *Introduction to social work.* Cape Town: Juta & Company.

Swaffield, S. 2008. Feedback: The central process in assessment for learning. *In*: Swaffield, S. 2008. (ed). *Unlocking Assessment: Understanding for reflection and application*. New York: Routledge

Taibbi, R. 1995. *Clinical Supervision. A four-stage process of growth and discovery*. Milwaukee: Families International, Inc.

Tam, M. 2000. *Positivism and constructivism.*
Available: http://www.ifets.info/journals/3_2/tam.html. [Accessed: 21/01/2010].

Tesch, R. 1990. *Qualitative research: analysis types and software tools*. Bristol: Falmer.

Toseland, R.W. & Rivas, R.F. 2001. *An introduction to group work practice*. New York: MacMillan Publishing Company.

Tsien, T.B. K. & Tsui, M. 2007. A participative learning and teaching model: The partnership of students and teachers in practice teaching. *Social Work education*, 26(4):348-358.

Tutty, L.M.; Rothery, M.A. & Grinnel, R.M. 1996. *Qualitative research for social workers*. London: Allyn & Bacon.

Tyler, R.W. 1949. *Basic principles of curriculum and instruction*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

University of the Western Cape. 2007. Unpublished: *Quality assurance report: Intermediate fieldwork education.*

University of the Western Cape. 2008. *University Calendar Part VIII*. Community Health Sciences Faculty.

University of the Western Cape: 2008. Unpublished: *Intermediate Fieldwork Guide: BSW 301*. Social Work Department.

Van der Horst, H. & McDonald, R. 1997. *Outcomes-based education: A teacher's manual.* Pretoria: Kagiso Publishers.

Van Niekerk, L & Killen, R. 2000. *Teaching strategies for outcomes-based education*. (2nd ed). Cape Town: Juta & Co.

Van Rensberg, V. & Bogo, M. 1991. A teaching model to unite classroom and field. *Journal for Social Work Education*, 27(3): 271-278.

Van Rensburg, W. & Lamberti, P. 2004. The language of learning and teaching in higher education. *In*: Gravett, S. & Geyser, H. (eds). 2004. *Teaching and learning in higher education*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Vella, J. 2000. *Taking learning to task.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Vella, J.1994. *Learning to listen: Learning to teach.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Von Schlicht, H. 2003. *Die benutiging van maatskaplikewerksupervisie in die onderrig van 'n diverse studentepopulasie.* Ongepubliseerde MA tesis. Stellenbosch: Universiteit van Stellenbosch.

Vygotsky, L. 1978. Interaction between learning and development. In*: Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Weimer, M. 2002. *Learner-centered teaching: Five key changes to practice.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Wenger, E. 1998. *Communities of practice, learning, meaning and identity.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Whittaker, A. 2009. *Research skills for social workers: Transforming social work practice*. Britain: Learning Matters Ltd.

Wiggins, P. A. 1999. *Education and training for social welfare: Intervention knowledge development.* Unpublished: DPhil. University of Port Elizabeth, (NMMU).Port Elizabeth

Willig, C. 2001. *Introducing qualitative research in Psychology*. McGraw Hill: Open University Press.

White Paper on Higher Education. 1997. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Woolfolk, A. E., & Hoy, W.K. 1990. Prospective teachers' sense of efficacy and beliefs about control. *Journal of Educational Psychology,* 82:81-91.

Yin, R.K. 2003. *Case study research-design and methods.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

ANNEXURE: A

IVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

ivate Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa
Tel: +27 21-959 2849, Fax: 27 21-959 2845
E-mail: scarelse@uwc.ac.za

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET: STUDENTS

Project Title: Challenges of integrating theory and practice in social work teaching and learning

What is this study about?

This is a research project being conducted by SHERNAAZ CARELSE at the University of the Western Cape. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are involve in teaching and learning at third year level in the social work department . The purpose of this research project is to explore the challenges experienced by lecturers, field supervisors and students with regard to theory and practice integration relating to social work fieldwork training.

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

You will be asked to participate in a focus group with other (students) participants for the duration of two hours in which:

a) You will engage in a discussion on the challenges you experience in terms of theory and practice integration with reference to teaching strategies, techniques and assessment tools employed by lectures and fieldwork supervisors.

b) You will be requested to discuss the challenges experienced with regard to the supervision and assessment tools employed by field supervisors to link theory and practice in Fieldwork Education.

You might be requested for a follow up session if clarity is needed about issues from the initial focus group session. The focus group session will be conducted in the social work department at UWC.

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,

a) All audio taped interviews and files will be kept in a locked filing cabinet to which only the researcher has access.
b) The researcher will make use of identification numbers instead of participants' names.
c) All transcribed interviews will be filed using a password – protected computer system.

d) Responses will not be made publically without your consent.

If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible.
In accordance with legal requirements and/or professional standards, we will disclose to the appropriate individuals and/or authorities information that comes to our attention concerning child abuse or neglect or potential harm to you or others.

What are the risks of this research?

There may be some risks from participating in this research study. In the case of ethical dilemmas I will liaise with my supervisor and you, the participant in resolving such matters.
I will guard against possible psychological harm that you may experience by:

a) Preparing and debriefing you before and after the interview.
b) I will arrange for intervention should the need arise.
c) If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time , you will not be penalized by way of assessment or evaluation in academic work.

Other than the emotional risks of disclosing teaching and learning challenges you are experiencing, there are no known risks associated with participating in this research project.

What are the benefits of this research?
The benefits to you include:

This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the investigator learn more about the causes of challenges experienced in teaching and learning. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of theory and practice integration and the challenges associated with teaching and learning in the context of exit level outcomes.

Describe the anticipated benefits to science or society expected from the research, if any.

a) The findings of the study would inform the quality assurance document required by the Standards Generating Body.
b) The South African Council for Social Services Professionals could draw on this information to compare implementation of the Bachelor of Social Work qualification in terms of the Exit Level Outcomes at all South African universities.

c) Information on the level of implementing the Exit Level Outcomes would be valuable for the evaluation and re-registration of the Bachelor of Social Work degree on the National Qualifications Framework in 2009.
d) The social work department at UWC will be in a position to make informed decision with regard to programme and curriculum development.

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?
I will consult with you and my supervisor with regard to assistance and support should you be negatively affected in any way by participating in this research.
You may also report grievance you may have from participating in this study, to the Head of the Department and or the Dean of the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences.

What if I have questions?
This research is being conducted by Shernaaz Carelse in the Social Work Department at the University of the Western Cape. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Shernaaz Carelse *at*: 021 959 2849 or scarelse@uwc.ac.za

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:
Head of Department: Professor K. Collins
Dean of the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences: Professor R. Mpofu
University of the Western Cape
Private Bag X17
Bellville 7535
This research has been approved by the University of the Western Cape's Senate Research Committee and Ethics Committee.

ANNEXURE: B

CONSENT FORM

If you agree to participate, kindly complete the following and sign.

Title of research: Challenges of integrating theory and practice in social work teaching and learning

I have read the information about this research / it has been explained to me. I had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I..... confirm that I understand the goal, and risks/benefits of participating in this research project.

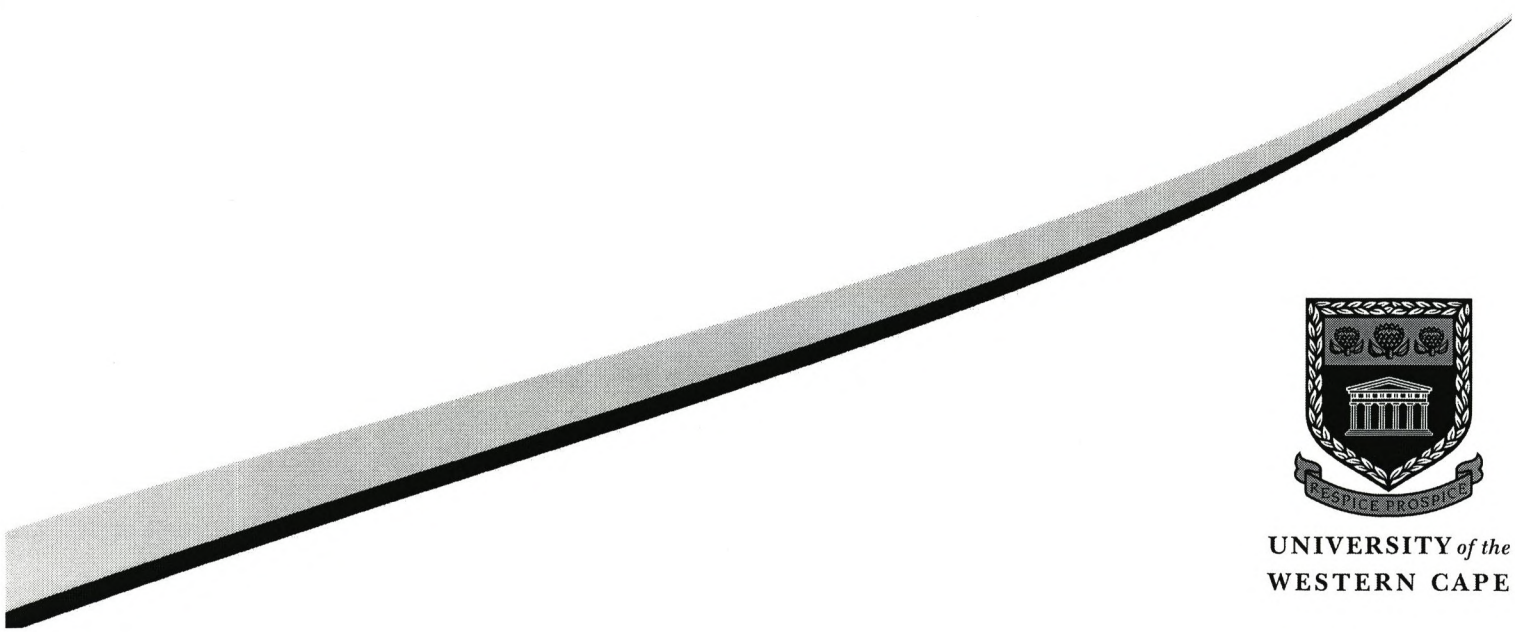
I was informed that the findings will be reported anonymously and that the researcher will at all times adhere to professional ethical behaviour in this project.

I am participating voluntarily and am aware that I can withdraw at any time should I wish to do so.

Participant's Name:..... Researcher: Shernaaz Carelse

Participant's Signature: ..... Researcher's Signature: .....

Date:..... ..... Date: .....



ANNEXURE: C

SOUTH AFRICAN QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

Established in terms of Act 58 of 1995

SOUTH AFRICAN QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

QUALIFICATION:

Bachelor of Social Work

SAQA QUAL ID	QUALIFICATION TITLE	
23994	Bachelor of Social Work	
SGB NAME	SGB Social Work	
ABET BAND	PROVIDER NAME	
Undefined		
QUALIFICATION CODE	QUAL TYPE	SUBFIELD
HEA-7-National First Degree	National First Degree	Promotive Health and Developmental Services
MINIMUM CREDITS	NQF LEVEL	QUALIFICATION CLASS
510	Level 7	Regular-ELOAC
SAQA DECISION NUMBER	REGISTRATION START DATE	REGISTRATION END DATE

PURPOSE OF THE QUALIFICATION

The purpose of this professional four-year qualification is to equip learners with:

- Skills to challenge structural sources of poverty, inequality, oppression, discrimination and exclusion.
- Knowledge and understanding of human behaviour and social systems and the skills to intervene at the points where people interact with their environments in order to promote social well-being.
- The ability and competence to assist and empower individuals, families, groups, organisations and communities to enhance their social functioning and their problem-solving capacities.
- The ability to promote, restore, maintain and enhance the functioning of individuals, families, groups and communities by enabling them to accomplish tasks, prevent and alleviate distress and use resources effectively.
- An understanding of and the ability to demonstrate social work values and the principles of human rights and social justice while interacting with and assisting the range of human diversity.
- The understanding and ability to provide social work services towards protecting people who are vulnerable, at-risk and unable to protect themselves.
- Knowledge and understanding of both the South African and the global welfare context and the ability to implement the social development approach in social work services.
- Understanding of the major social needs, issues, policies and legislation in the South African social welfare context and the social worker's role and contribution.
- The skills to work effectively within teams, including social work teams, multi- and inter-disciplinary teams as well as multi-sectoral teams.

As stated, this is a professional qualification. The needs of South Africa and employers demand that social workers are well grounded in general practice with knowledge, understanding and skills in a variety of settings. This qualification aims to meet these demands and consequently there are no exit levels in Social Work other than at NQF Level 7. However, this does not prevent providers from awarding a qualification at NQF Level 5 or 6 provided that the words 'Social Work' are not included in the qualification's title.

The ethical parameters of social work education, training and practice, require that learners must be registered with the SACSSP (South African Council for Social Service Professions) as student social workers, in terms of section 17 of the Social Service Professions Act, 1978 on entering NQF Level 6 learning programmes.

The successful completion of the qualification will enable the learner to be registered with the SACSSP and practise as a social worker.

Rationale:

This qualification is designed to meet the core purposes of Social Work which are embedded in the following internationally accepted definition:

The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work. [International Federation of Social Workers and International Association of Schools of Social Work, 2000].

South Africa has adopted the social development paradigm of welfare, thus supporting a people-centred approach to social and economic development. Social work plays a major role in addressing the many development needs of South African society through social work services provided within many sectors such as government departments, businesses, non-governmental organisations and in private practice.

Lack of social cohesion, poverty and inequality constitute major threats to a country's social, economic and political development. South Africa now has the highest Gini co-efficient in the world, with an exceptionally rapid developing black middle class, so much so that the Gini co-efficient within the Black communities is close to the national norm. This indicates a pattern change - with exceptionally high rates of inequality emerging within population groups, with the socio-economic status of the majority of people essentially remaining unchanged. This situation results in fermenting disappointment and conflict. Social work plays a major role in addressing the needs of individuals, families, groups and communities. It is also the task of social workers to act as advocates and watch-dogs for the poorest and most marginalised members of our society; to help people identify the impact of social and economic oppression and exclusion; and to engage people in social action to alter socio-economic structures and to improve their life circumstances.

Social workers are equipped to deal with many of the consequences of social inequality, poverty and marginalisation. These include, amongst others, high levels of unemployment, child abuse, domestic violence, crime, drug abuse and HIV/AIDS.

Given the rights of civil society and the ethical requirements of the profession, heavy weighting is given in this qualification to the development of practitioners who are critically reflective and able to practise within the value perspective of the social work profession. The overarching values that guide social work education and training are social justice and respect for all.

The social work qualification is also designed to enable learners to pursue further personal and professional development and to promote life-long learning.

NOTE:

This qualification focuses on Social Work but should not be seen in isolation from other social service professions. These social service professions include for example, Probation Work, Child and Youth Care, Youth Work and Community Development. The present situation is that in order to operate and develop qualifications, each profession must establish a professional board which is recognised by the relevant professional council, in this instance the SA Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP).

The social service professions are in various stages of development in terms of establishing professional boards and in developing their qualifications. The SACSSP and the SGB for Social Work have commenced a process of dialogue with these professions. In particular, the SGB has declared its commitment to assist other social service professions and has discussed the common ground and articulation possibilities between social work and the other social service professions' qualifications with a number of relevant stakeholders. It is likely that this will then culminate in exit levels at Diploma and/or Certificate levels below NQF Level 7.

RECOGNIZE PREVIOUS LEARNING?

Y

LEARNING ASSUMED TO BE IN PLACE

Learners who register for this qualification must have the following skills equivalent to NQF Level 4:

- Reading, writing, listening and speaking in English as at least 80% of all textbooks and documentation are in English.
- The ability to undertake independent learning.

A typical applicant will have a NQF Level 4 qualification, equivalent to matriculation with full exemption or an appropriate access-route qualification approved by the service provider. A learner with the FET Certificate in Social Auxiliary Work (NQF Level 4) will gain access to the Social Work qualification.

Recognition of Prior Learning:

With regard to RPL, applicants who fall outside of the admissions criteria, but who can demonstrate (to the satisfaction of the service provider) that they have a qualification, experiential or work-based learning (which has taken the learner to the equivalent of a NQF Level 4 qualification) may be considered for admission into the social work programme.

QUALIFICATION RULES

N/A

EXIT LEVEL OUTCOMES

1. Develop and maintain professional social work relationships with client systems.

Range:
Includes individuals, families, groups, communities and organisations.

2. Assess client systems' social functioning.

Range:
Social functioning includes roles, needs, interactions, strengths, challenges and aspirations.

3. Plan and implement appropriate social work intervention strategies and techniques at micro, mezzo and macro levels.

Range:
Micro level refers to the individual, family and small, informal group. Mezzo level refers to formal organisations, groups and networks. Macro level includes broader levels of community and society as well as international and global spheres.

4. Access and utilise resources appropriate to client systems' needs and strengths.

Range:
Resources may include physical, financial, technological, material and social, as well as relevant professionals and persons.

5. Produce and maintain records of social work interventions, processes and outcomes.

Range:
Records include, for example situational analyses, assessments, process, progress and statutory reports as well as correspondence relating to client systems.

6. Evaluate the outcomes of social work intervention strategies, techniques and processes.

7. Terminate social work intervention.

8. Negotiate and utilise contracts during social work intervention.

9. Demonstrate social work values while interacting with human diversity.

Range:
Human diversity Includes race, culture, religion, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, political orientation, age, differential abilities, and socio-economic status.

10. Appraise and implement the ethical principles and values of social work.

11. Use, plan and execute social work research.

Range:
Includes knowledge and appropriate application of the various research designs and methodologies used.

12. Work effectively with social workers and members of inter-sectoral and multi- and/or inter-disciplinary teams in social service delivery.

13. Identify, select and implement various techniques, methods and means of raising awareness, developing critical consciousness about the structural forces of oppression, exclusion and disempowerment, and use such awareness to engage people as change agents.

14. Analyse human behaviour with regard to the intersections of race, class, culture, ethnicity, gender, differential abilities and sexual orientation.

15. Critically appraise social welfare and social work from a global, regional (African) and national perspective.

16. Critically appraise the current status and position of the social work profession within the South African welfare context.

17. Apply and uphold the basic values and principles enshrined in the Bill of Rights in the S.A. Constitution in relation to social work service delivery.

18. Elucidate national, provincial and local governance structures, and the general laws and charters governing social welfare policy and social work services in South Africa.

Range:
Relevant sections include the Non-Profit Organisations' Act, the Social Services Professions Act, the National Advisory Council's Act, the Social Assistance Act, the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, the Skills Development Act, the Labour Relations Act and Agreements such as the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights.

19. Demonstrate understanding of how social policies and legislation on social issues impact on these issues and how to use legislation ethically and accountably in order to protect and improve the quality of life of client systems from a social work perspective.

Range:
Pertinent social issues may include poverty, unemployment, HIV/AIDS, child abuse and neglect, drug abuse, disabilities, domestic violence, prostitution, compulsive gambling, crime and housing.

20. Demonstrate understanding of how social welfare policy and legislation are developed and influenced.

21. Demonstrate understanding of the roles, functions, knowledge and skills for effective social work supervision and consultation.

22. Demonstrate understanding of roles, functions, principles and characteristics of management and administration within social service delivery.

23. Formulate a business plan for the funding of to fund social services.

24. Identify the influence of the relationship between socio-political and economic factors on social services.

25. Demonstrate understanding of the roles and functions of the social worker within relevant statutory frameworks.

26. Identify how social security is used optimally for the benefit of client systems.

27. Identify the purpose, functions and principles of social work within the social development paradigm.

Critical Cross-field Outcomes:

The exit level outcomes and the associated assessment criteria listed above are consistent with the following Critical Cross-field Outcomes listed in Section 7(3) of the NSB Regulations:

- Identify and solve problems using critical and creative thinking. (Exit Level Outcomes 2, 3, 4, 6, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23,

25)
- Work effectively with others as a member of a team, group, organisation and community. (Exit Level Outcomes 3, 4, 12, 13, 18, 21, 22, 25)
- Organise and manage oneself and one's activities responsibly and effectively. (Exit Level Outcomes 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 13, 22, 25)
- Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information. (Exit Level Outcomes 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 19)
- Communicate effectively using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in the modes of oral and/or written presentation. (Exit Level Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 11, 13, 23)
- Demonstrate cultural and aesthetic sensitivity in dealings with clients, colleagues and communities. (Exit Level Outcomes 1-27)
- Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation. (Exit Level Outcomes 1-27)
- Demonstrate ethical and professional behaviour. (Exit Level Outcomes 1-27)
- Lay the foundation for life-long learning and ongoing competency. (Exit Level Outcome 12, 13, 21)

ASSOCIATED ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

1.1 Professional relationships are purposefully founded on knowledge of and insight into the nature of client systems and their dynamics.
1.2 Professional relationships are characterised by the purposeful implementation of social work principles at the individual, family, group, community and organisational level.
1.3 Professional relationships clearly demonstrate an understanding of ethical parameters.
1.4 Enabling environments are created for client systems to develop their full capacity.

2.1 Assessments reflect the ability to undertake a comprehensive analysis of client systems' needs and strengths.
2.2 Analyses of client systems' needs and strengths reflect the application of appropriate theoretical frameworks.
2.3 Assessments demonstrate the use of appropriate social work tools and data.
2.4 Assessments clearly reflect the influence and impact of social circumstances and social systems on client systems' functioning.
2.5 Assessments demonstrate a holistic approach to client systems' social functioning.
2.6 Assessments result in, as far as is reasonable and possible, mutually agreed upon goals.
2.7 Assessment processes and conclusions are recorded clearly, systematically and accurately.

3.1 Intervention plans take into account social systems impacting on client systems' functioning.
3.2 Intervention plans are based on assessment and the appropriate use of strategies and techniques to achieve identified goals.
3.3 Intervention strategies, models and techniques are based on comprehensive assessment of client systems.
3.4 Intervention strategies and techniques are purposefully aimed at the achievement of identified goals.
3.5 Interventions reflect the appropriate application of a range of skills (Range of skills includes, for example communication, problem-solving, networking, negotiation, mediation, advocacy and interviewing skills).
3.6 Intervention strategies and techniques are appropriately implemented in accordance with corresponding theoretical assumptions.
3.7 Interventions include the appropriate use of social work tools and data.

4.1 Resources that are identified and utilised are appropriate to client systems' needs, strengths and goals.
4.2 Referrals to appropriate resources are made according to agreed upon methods of referral.
4.3 Networking with resources and organisations is linked directly to the needs of client systems.

5.1 Client systems' files contain all relevant reports according to agreed upon time frames, standards and procedures.
5.2 Reports contain accurate details of all intervention activities, processes and outcomes according to agreed upon or prescribed formats.
5.3 Reports are channelled as per prescribed procedures, when necessary.

6.1 Evaluations clearly describe the outcomes of the intervention strategies, techniques and processes utilised in relation to the stated goals and client systems' strengths and needs.
6.2 Evaluations are purposefully used as the basis for planning, termination and implementation of on-going services.
6.3 Evaluations demonstrate a capacity for self-awareness and reflection.

7.1 Wherever feasible, termination of services is mutually agreed to by the relevant parties and occurs in accordance with social work principles.
7.2 Preparation of client systems for termination of services is timeous and realistic.

7.3 Termination is based, as far as is reasonable and possible, on the achievement of goals and the client systems' ability to function independently.
7.4 All administrative aspects of termination are completed in accordance with professional requirements.

8.1 Contracts contain, as far as is reasonable and possible, mutually agreed upon principles, expectations, goals and procedures.
8.2 Contracts are used to guide practice with clients.
8.3 Contracts contain an exposition of possible results/consequences of breaching the mutually agreed upon principles, expectations, goals and procedures for both the practitioner and the client system.

9.1 Assessments, intervention plans, strategies, techniques, and outcomes analyses reflect sensitivity for diversity and the ability to work with diverse client systems.
9.2 Practice demonstrates awareness of different viewpoints and values, and the ability to appreciate these in relation to one's own views and values.
9.3 Assessments explicitly include analyses of possible elements of diversity that may impact on the professional relationship.
9.4 Interaction and teamwork within the practice context reflect understanding and acceptance of diversity.
9.5 Referrals are appropriate to and in accordance with the unique needs of client systems.

10.1 Practice demonstrates awareness of, and ability to implement social work values and ethical principles.
10.2 The practical implications of ethical principles and values for social work practice are critically appraised.
10.3 The provisions in the Code of Ethics of the South African Council for Social Service Professions are critiqued in relation to its potential limitations and benefits.
10.4 The potential impact of personal life experiences and personal values on social work practice is clearly recognised.

11.1 Research reports reflect knowledge of, and skills in, social work research.
11.2 Research reports display a critical appreciation of the link between knowledge construction, research and social work practice.
11.3 Research proposals reflect a well-formulated plan for the research.
11.4 Research ethics are clearly identified and considered in the design and implementation of research activity.
11.5 Descriptions reflect knowledge of both quantitative and qualitative research paradigms; research designs; sampling procedures; and methods of data collection and data analysis.
11.6 Interpretations of data and the recommendations are consistent with data analyses and study findings.
11.7 Practice demonstrates the application of social science theory and research.
11.8 Research processes are executed in accordance with accepted research protocol.

12.1 Descriptions clearly indicate the purpose and value of the team approach in social work services.
12.2 Descriptions clearly and appropriately distinguish between the individual roles and functions of the social work team members (social worker, student social worker, social auxiliary worker and volunteer) in social service delivery.
12.3 The definitions of social auxiliary work and social work highlight the differences between the two and their relationship with each other.
12.4 Social auxiliary work is clearly understood as providing a supportive and complementary service to social work, focusing particularly on prevention, developmental services and social care.
12.5 The critical role played by social auxiliary work within the social welfare context is substantially motivated.
12.6 Practice clearly reflects a critical understanding of the contribution made and valuable role played by volunteers in social service delivery.
12.7 Practice reflects the ability to identify and work with sectors relevant to the identified social problem or issue.
12.8 The roles and functions of team members in a given context, relevant to the learner's field placement, are clearly identified.
12.9 Practice reflects the ethics of teamwork.

13.1 Selected techniques, methods and means of awareness-raising are appropriate to the specific social issue, the social context and the level at which such awareness-raising needs to take place.
13.2 The specific social issue (e.g. homosexuality, gender discrimination, HIV/AIDS, disability) that must be targeted as an area of intervention is clearly described.
13.3 The social and cultural context against which the intervention takes place is clearly elucidated.
13.4 Practice demonstrates the ability to engage individuals, families, groups and/or communities in critical and reflective discussion regarding the impact of oppressive forces in their lives.
13.5 Practice demonstrates the ability to assist individuals, families, groups and/or communities to explore alternative identities in order to enhance self-esteem.
13.6 Practice reflects efforts to engage people as change agents, advocates and/or lobbyists by building on their

strengths and resources.

14.1 Analyses clearly elucidate how individual, family, group and community identities are formed in relation to socio-structural forces of oppression and/or exclusion.
14.2 Analyses provide clear indications of how social differentiation and social stratification pave the way for prejudice, ethno-centricism and discrimination.
14.3 Descriptions clearly elucidate the relationship between social differentiation and social stratification (in respect of factors such as race, class, culture, ethnicity, gender, differential abilities and sexual orientation) and access to power, position, privilege, income, status and resources.

15.1 Analyses reflect a clear understanding of the key elements, functions and principles of social welfare and social work.
15.2 Descriptions clearly distinguish between the similarities and differences between social welfare and social work.
15.3 Social welfare and social work are clearly described in terms of the key stages in their historical development against the background of socio-economic and political influences.
15.4 The various models of social welfare are critically examined in terms of their impact on social service delivery.
15.5 Descriptions contain a clear understanding of the historical and current trends in social welfare and social work on individuals, families, groups and communities.

16.1 The core characteristics and qualities of a profession are outlined with reference to the social work profession.
16.2 The defining characteristics of social work, as a profession, are clearly articulated.
16.3 The relationship between social work and other social service professions is critically evaluated in terms of roles, responsibilities and functions.
16.4 The influence of the language and intent of policy documents on the image and status of social work in South Africa is critically appraised.

17.1 The provisions of the Bill of Rights are clearly described.
17.2 The basic values and principles underlying the Bill of Rights are clearly extrapolated.
17.3 The relationship between the values and principles of the Bill of Rights and those of the social work profession is critically evaluated.
17.4 The social worker's role and functions in protecting and promoting human rights are identified in practical terms.
17.5 The relevant resources, available to the social worker for the protection of human rights are clearly identified (Resources include the Public Protector, the Human Rights Commission, the Commission for Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities and the Commission for Gender Equality)
17.6 An appropriate plan/strategy is developed to address the infringement of human rights.

18.1 The respective structure, roles and functions of each sphere of government and their inter-relationships are clearly outlined.
18.2 The roles and functions of the three spheres of government in the provision of social welfare services, and in the development of social welfare policy and legislation, are clearly identified.
18.3 Descriptions of relevant sections of legislation and charters include their impact on social welfare policy and social work practice.
18.4 Descriptions of the South African judicial system include the structure, roles and powers of the various courts as well as those of social workers.

19.1 The nature and extent of social issue/s are clearly described.
19.2 Analyses provide a clear explanation of how social issue/s impact on individuals, families, groups and communities.
19.3 Key strengths and weaknesses of current social policies and legislation concerning the social issue/s are identified and evaluated in relation to social work's values and principles.
19.4 Limitations of the social policy/policies that negatively impact on social service delivery and beneficiaries are clearly identified and described.
19.5 Practice reflects the ability to utilise welfare legislation ethically and accountably in the interests of client systems.
19.6 Proposals for amendments of a social policy are motivated and justified for the purpose of improving social services to beneficiaries.

20.1 Descriptions reflect the steps and phases involved in the process of social policy and legislation development.
20.2 Role players involved in formulating social policy and legislation at national and provincial levels are identified in terms of the functions that they perform.
20.3 The means by which individuals, families, groups, organisations and communities can influence social policy and legislation, are clearly identified.
20.4 An appropriate plan/strategy is developed to influence social policy and /or legislation in respect of at least one

social issue.

21.1 The roles and responsibilities of the supervisee and the supervisor are clearly articulated.
21.2 The transition from the role of supervisee to the role of supervisor is clearly described.
21.3 The advantages and disadvantages of the different models (including conventional one-to-one supervision, group supervision, peer supervision, and the use of case-conferences and staff development programmes as supervisory contexts) of supervision are clearly described.
21.4 The differences and similarities between supervision and consultation are clearly identified.
21.5 The role and responsibilities of the consultant are clearly described.
21.6 The ethical implications of supervision and consultation are clearly articulated.
21.7 Practice reflects the ability to utilise supervision effectively.

22.1 The qualities, principles and characteristics of management and administration are clearly articulated.
22.2 The skills, roles and duties of a social work manager and administrator are clearly described.
22.3 The types and theoretical underpinnings of modern management systems are described and critiqued.
22.4 Descriptions reflect a basic understanding of management and administration functions and tasks.
22.5 Meeting procedures and the roles of office bearers are clearly explained.

23.1 Plans reflect explicit and feasible aims and objectives consistent with an identified problem.
23.2 Plans elucidate anticipated outcomes within designated time frames.
23.3 Plans specifically contain measures for the sustainability of the programme/project.
23.4 Plans reflect a clear and realistic budget.

24.1 The impact of prevailing socio-political ideology and funding policies on organisational functioning is clearly identified.
24.2 The challenges facing social service agencies in relation to technological advances and diminishing social service expenditure are clearly described.

25.1 Policies and legislation in respect of areas such as criminal justice, mental health and child and family care are clearly described.
25.2 The roles and functions of the social worker in relation to the different courts and court procedures are clearly described.
25.3 Practice reflects ability to work in accordance with statutory and legal requirements and to carry out orders of the court.

26.1 Descriptions reflect knowledge of the different types of social security benefits available to people in South Africa.
26.2 Descriptions reflect knowledge of how social security benefits are accessed.
26.3 The relationship between social security benefits and poverty alleviation is clearly described.

27.1 The relationship between the purpose, functions and principles of social work and those of social development is clearly described.
27.2 Descriptions reflect a clear understanding of the relationship between economic and social development.
27.3 Descriptions reflect a clear understanding of the importance of local economic development through income generation and job creation strategies.
27.4 Strategies for human and social capital formation within the social development paradigm are identified clearly.
27.5 The links between micro and macro development issues are clearly described.

Integrated Assessment:

Throughout the qualification programme the following assessment strategies are used to ensure that exit level and critical cross-field outcomes are achieved:

- Written assignments, tests (or examination equivalent tests) and/or examinations.
- Fieldwork reports on different methods of social work practice; case-studies; class presentations.
- Observations of field practice.
- Joint evaluations with agency-based field supervisors and with learners.
- Simulations in structured learning environments.
- Oral examinations.
- Portfolios of learning materials and independent research projects.

Fieldwork is individually supervised and assessed on an individual and/or group basis. In addition, assessment for suitability for the profession takes place on a continuous basis in relation to each learner.

INTERNATIONAL COMPARABILITY

This qualification compares favourably to similar qualifications in the international arena. This has been verified through the South African structures affiliated to the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW). The IASSW recently formulated a draft document on Global Qualifying Standards for Social Work Education and Training and this qualification, by and large, measures up to the standards contained in the global document. This was verified with the Chairperson of the Global Qualifying Standards Committee who is a South African and who serves on the SGB for Social Work.

The qualification's integration of theory and practice enhances the competencies of persons completing the training and will make them highly regarded and actively sought internationally.

ARTICULATION OPTIONS

Learners with an NQF Level 7 Social Work qualification may proceed to a Masters programme in Social Work (NQF Level 8) or further learning programmes in Social Work and other related fields, depending on the electives chosen and the entry requirements of such programmes.

Articulation possibilities exist both within the tertiary institution offering the Social Work programme and across tertiary institutions.

Depending on the combination of credits taken at NQF Levels 5 and 6, horizontal articulation will be possible with other social service professions' programmes when they become available, for example, Child and Youth Care, Probation Work and Community Development. Horizontal articulation will also be possible with other disciplines such as Gender Studies, Psychology and Sociology.

A learner who does not complete the Social Work qualification may be assessed by a registered provider for the recognition of credits towards obtaining the FET Certificate in Social Auxiliary Work.

MODERATION OPTIONS

Internal and external moderation arrangements must be available and accredited as such by the relevant ETQA in accordance with the provider's policy. However, external moderation must be available for learners at Exit level 7.

CRITERIA FOR THE REGISTRATION OF ASSESSORS

The minimum basic requirements for assessors of theoretical and practical learning are the following:

- Registration with the SACSSP.
- At least a professional degree in Social Work (NQF Level 7).
- A minimum of 5 years appropriate experience.

Assessors must be registered with the relevant ETQA.

NOTES

Course Requirements:

The qualification contains both a theoretical and a field practice component that are inextricably intertwined and that cannot be separated in terms of credits and levels. The Exit Level Outcomes with their associated assessment criteria are also formulated to demonstrate this inter-relationship. Learners must be able to demonstrate competencies in practice, which means that they must be exposed to practical experience. Consequently, fieldwork placements occur throughout the learning programme in a variety of settings, ranging from observation and laboratory sessions to actual service delivery within a social service organisation.

Registration with the SACSSP as a student social worker is a statutory requirement when learners actually engage in providing services to individuals, families, groups and communities. This occurs when the learner enters NQF Level 6.

At least 320 of the credits for this professional qualification must be Social Work credits taken up to NQF Level 7.

Social Work credits are the core credits and another 10 credits are allocated to Fundamental learning. The remainder of the credits are allocated to Elective learning. The primary reason for not allocating credits and NQF levels to specific electives is three-fold:

- The qualifications/unit standards are not finalised as yet.
- There is an identified need to allow providers to design programmes that meet the real needs of different regions in South Africa.
- As part of transformation, the SACSSP has moved away from prescribing core subjects other than Social Work.

At least one of the Electives must be taken up to and completed on NQF Level 6.

Providers must be accredited by the relevant ETQA.

UNIT STANDARDS
(Note: A blank space after this line means that the qualification is not based on Unit Standards.)

ANNEXURE: D

Individual interview schedule with UWC students.

Project title: Challenges of integrating theory and practice in social work teaching and learning

Questions for **students** regarding the challenges they experience in terms of theory and practice integration.

A. Discussion/Questions relating to teaching and learning in the class room setting.

1. Describe the lecturing style you prefer. Why?
2. Give examples of how lectures are facilitated to ensure theory and practice integration
3. How does the following impact on the facilitation of learning
   - Academic environment
   - Lecturers' style and approach to facilitate teaching and learning
4. Other issues you want to mention relating to the facilitation of theory and practice integration in the class room setting

(10 minutes)

B. Discussion/Questions relating to the integration of theory and practice in the fieldwork/agency setting.

1. Describe how a typical supervision session is conducted
2. Give examples of how supervision sessions are used to make links between theory and practice.
3. How does the following impact on the facilitation of learning in the agency

(10 minutes)

C. Discussion on general challenges experienced by students relating to teaching and learning

What are the challenges you experience in terms of the following:

- Agency vs academic requirements
- Barriers to learning (language, writing style, academic writing, comprehension, agency demands. agency expectations, other)
- Personal challenges experienced by you the student (10 minutes)

Are there any other issues you want to mention relating to the facilitation of theory and practice integration in the agency setting? (5 minutes)

Total of 35 minute session

Annexure: E 1

Individual interview with fieldwork supervisors

Project title: Challenges of integrating theory and practice in social work teaching and learning

Questions for fieldwork supervisors with regard to the challenges of theory and practice integration?

Questions/Discussion:

1. Give examples of how supervision sessions are facilitated to ensure theory and practice integration.
2. What are the challenges **you** are experiencing in terms of the facilitation of learning within the agency setting?
3. What do you perceive as challenges that **students** may experience in terms of the facilitation of theory and practice integration in the agency setting?
4. What are the challenges you experience in terms agency requirements vs academic requirements?
4. Other issues you want to mention relating to the facilitation of theory and practice integration in the agency setting.

Annexure: E 2

Group conversation with 5 third year fieldwork supervisors

Research Study

Social Work: The challenges of integrating theory and practice in social work teaching and learning

A. Introduction

1. Introduce myself
2. Introduce research topic
3. Thank participants for attendance
4. Hand out name tags
5. Permission to use and set up voice recorder (2 Minutes)

Pause: Allow participants to write names on tags

B. Aims of the study

1. Hand out the aims of the study to participants
2. Read/talk though it with participants
3. Ask for questions/comments
4. Respond to questions/comments (3 Minutes)

Pause

C. Complete participant information sheets

1. Hand out participant information sheets
2. Participants read through information sheets
3. Participants sign consent forms (2 minutes)

Pause

D. Introductions

Participants introduce themselves

Information required for introduction:

- Name
- History of supervision with UWC or any other institution? (3 minutes)

Pause

E. Skills a third year student should have

Basic skills and knowledge a third year social work student is required to have after completing the year level

- What are the basic skills a third year student should have at the end of that year level?
- What is the basic knowledge base a third year student should have at the end of that year level?
- What are the basic requirements a third year student should have to function optimally in fieldwork practice?
- What are your views about a third year student's emotional readiness to enter fieldwork practice?

(15 minutes)

F. Discussion

What are the challenges students experience with regard to theory and practice integration

Pause

2. Discussion/Questions relating to the integration of theory and practice in the fieldwork/agency setting.

1. Give examples of how supervision sessions are used to make links between theory and practice.
2. How does the following impact on the facilitation of learning in the agency setting

- Agency vs academic requirements
- Collaboration with fieldwork coordinator and lecturers
- Supervisor's style and approach to facilitate supervision sessions

(10 minutes)

Pause

3. Discussion on general challenges experienced by students relating to teaching and learning

What are the challenges you experience in terms of the following:

- Enabling environments at the agency
- Barriers to learning (language, writing style, academic writing, comprehension, agency demands. agency expectations, other)
- Personal challenges experienced by the student
- Prescribed learning outcomes (ELO) (15 minutes)

Pause

Conclusion:

Other issues you want to mention relating to the facilitation of theory and practice integration in the agency setting (5)

Total of 1 hour

ANNEXURE: F

Focus group Session with UWC students.

Project title: Challenges of integrating theory and practice in social work teaching and learning

Questions for **students** regarding the challenges they experience in terms of theory and practice integration.

A. Discussion/Questions relating to teaching and learning in the class room setting.

1. Describe the lecturing style you prefer. Why?
2. Give examples of how lectures are facilitated to ensure theory and practice integration
3. How does the following impact on the facilitation of learning
   - Academic environment
   - Lecturers' style and approach to facilitate teaching and learning
4. Other issues you want to mention relating to the facilitation of theory and practice integration in the class room setting

(10 minutes)

B. Discussion/Questions relating to the integration of theory and practice in the fieldwork/agency setting.

1. Describe how a typical supervision session is conducted
2. Give examples of how supervision sessions are used to make links between theory and practice.
3. How does the following impact on the facilitation of learning in the agency

(10 minutes)

C. Discussion on general challenges experienced by students relating to teaching and learning

What are the challenges you experience in terms of the following:

- Agency vs academic requirements
- Barriers to learning (language, writing style, academic writing, comprehension, agency demands. agency expectations, other)
- Personal challenges experienced by you the student (10 minutes)

Are there any other issues you want to mention relating to the facilitation of theory and practice integration in the agency setting? (5 minutes)

Total of 35 minute session

ANNEXURE: G

Title: The challenges of integrating theory and practice in social work teaching and learning

Interview Schedule for Focus Group Session with NMMU Students

A. Introduction

1. Introduce myself
2. Introduce research topic
3. Thank participants for attendance
4. Hand out name tags
5. Permission to use and set up voice recorder (5 minutes)

Pause: Allow participants to write names on tags

B. Aims of the study

1. Hand out the aims of the study to participants
2. Read/talk though it with participants
3. Ask for questions/comments
4. Respond to questions/comments (5 minutes)

Pause

C. Complete participant information sheets

1. Hand out participant information sheets
2. Participants read through information sheets
3. Participants sign consent forms (5 minutes)

Pause

D. Introductions

Participants introduce themselves
Information required for introduction:

- Name
- First language?
- Where are you originally from? (5 minutes)

Pause

E. Exercise:

Ask participants to briefly write down their first learning experiences (informal & formal)

- Describe your first **informal learning experience**. Who facilitated the learning/teaching?
- Describe your first **formal learning experience**. Who facilitated the learning/teaching?
- Why is this significant to you? (5 minutes)

Pause

F. Discussion

What are the challenges students experience with regard to theory and practice integration

1. Discussion relating to teaching and learning in the class room setting.

Give examples of how lectures are facilitated to ensure theory and practice integration (10minutes)

Pause

G. Discussion

2. Discussion/Questions relating to the integration of theory and practice in the fieldwork/agency setting.

Give examples of how supervision sessions are used to make links between theory and practice. (10 minutes)

Pause

H. Discussion

3. Discussion on general challenges experienced by students relating to teaching and learning

- Enabling environments at the agency
- Barriers to learning (language, writing style, academic writing, comprehension, agency demands. agency expectations, other)
- Personal challenges experienced by you the student
- Agency requirements (from the student) (10 minutes)

Other issues you want to mention relating to the facilitation of theory and practice integration in the agency setting (10 minutes)

Total of 1 hour

ANNEXURE: H

Project title: Challenges of integrating theory and practice in social work teaching and learning

Dear lecturer

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study.
Please respond to the questions listed below.

1. Please write a brief summary on how you conduct a typical lecture. In your response please mention whether you include an outline of the outcomes for the lecture in your introduction/conclusion?
2. How do you conduct lectures in order to facilitate understanding of theory and its application to practice?
3. What are the challenges you are experiencing in the facilitation of teaching and learning?
4. How does the following impact on your facilitation of teaching and learning?
   - Academic environment
   - Students' individual characteristics/personal obstacles
   - Learning outcomes of the social work curriculum (for the module (s) you are facilitating)
   - You personal style and approach to facilitation of learning
5. Other issues you want to mention relating to lecturing and the facilitation of integrating theory and practice.

Please place your written response in the pigeonhole marked Shernaaz Carelse.
Remember your response can be anonymous.

Your participation is appreciated and valued.

Thank you

Shernaaz Carelse

ANNEXURE: I

TEXT BOX A: NUMBERED LINES & COMMENTS IN THE MARGINS

90. Participant: I want to add to what she (pointing to another participant) said. I 91. get the feeling third and fourth year level that they know a little about the 92. theory but it is detached from what they go and do in the field. When they get 93. to a client they think they got to make uhm… the client cry and then they have 94. done something good. So maybe in order to be ….. to set goals and you know 95. the purpose for the interview. I sometimes feel that they quite lost and they got 96. this person and whatever this person does that's what , where they go . Maybe 97. to know about goal setting with the client. That is all part of what they are being 98. trained here. It all comes back to theory integration.	SGI (90-92) Topic: Knowledge-Have theory knowledge. ELO 2.2 do not apply theoretical frameworks & intervention strategies & techniques are not done in accordance with corresponding theoretical assumptions SGI (95-98) Topic: Theory knowledge-Goals for the interview/inter-vention. ELO 2.2&6

ANNEXURE: J

TEXT BOX B: INDICATING UNDERLYING MEANING

What is this about?

What is the underlying meaning of what is being said?

The supervisor seems to have some prejudices. She mentioned 'swart' and 'bruin' students a few times. She emphasised lack of planning skills, respect and commitment to the agency and the clients. She is not prepared to have students from UWC placed at the agency in future. Supervisor makes distinction between theory and practice as if the two are not interrelated. It would seem she devalues theory knowledge and values a student who is able to "do the work" more. She mentions that she is not a theory person but that she is a good worker. She mention as challenge that a particular student who is according to her "practically stronger" struggled to start a group because the student did not have theory knowledge or any sort of tool to initiate some sort of assessment or intervention. She mentioned that it took extremely long for a student to come up with an intervention plan yet she prefers this type of student above an "academically strong" student. She refers to students who academically strong as cheating because they merely have book knowledge according to her. It seems al so that the supervisor did not take kindly to the student who challenges the work done by the agency. Lecturing staff would welcome a student who asks questions and challenges practice. It would appear that the students lacked respect for the supervisor, commitment to the clients and the work they were supposed to do. They lacked accountability. They manipulate the situation. She does not mention any theory integration in terms of her expectations, apart from students not being able to do the care plan. It would appear as if she does not understand the assessment criteria of the university.

ANNEXURE: K

Step 3 in the data analysis process		
List of themes, categories and sub-categories that emerged from the data collected during 2008		
UWC Students	**Field Supervisors**	**Lecturers**
Theme	Theme	Theme
Facilitation of learning: classroom setting	Student supervision	Facilitation of learning
Category	Category	Category
Teaching tecniques	Suitability of placements	Social workers as facilitators of learning
Sub-category	Sub-category	Sub-category
Role plays & observation	Theory frameworks	Teaching methods
Group discussions & case studies	Supervisor knowledge base	Strategies & tecniques: int. of th&prac
Cooperative learning	Collaboration between supervisor & co-ord	Category
Category	Theme	Collaboration: facilitators of learning
Structure of third year programme	Students' personal challenges	Theme
Sub-category	Category	Student academic background
Workload & time management	Time management	Category
Previous learning & scaffolding		Student underpreparedness
Theme		Sub-category
Facilitation of learning: fieldwork setting		Language barriers
Category		Reading skills
Suitability of placements		Writing skills
Language barriers		
Sub-category		
Agency vs academic requirements		
Language barriers		
Quality of supervision		
Theme		
Personal Challenges		
Category		
Access to prescribed books		
Time management		
Category		
Emotional intelligence		
Left overs/unique themes		
Emotional readiness		